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# Parent Participation in the Educational Process and Student Achievement

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# PARENT PARTICIPATION IN THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS

# AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

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# ABSTRACT

## PARENT PARTICIPATION IN THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

LINDA WORRELL DEANS
OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY, 1988
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The purpose of this study was to determine the level of parental involvement between parent and child as well as between parent and school. After the level of parent participation was established, the data set was used to determine whether a relationship exists between the level of parental involvement and student achievement at selected secondary urban schools. The selected secondary schools include two different school divisions.

The study employed five approaches: (1) a descriptive analysis of the variables of parental interaction with the child as it relates to a personal, affective level; a monitoring level; and a social level; as well as parental interaction with the school on a direct level and indirect level; (2) a descriptive analysis of demographic family and student information to include combined family income, grade level of student, age, number of children in household, employment of student and race; (3) documentation of student achievement with grade point average (GPA) and scores on the SRA Test; (4) a statistical analysis utilizing step-wise multiple regression to determine if a relationship exists between

the levels of parent participation and combined family income, race, age, grade level, number of children in household and employment status of child; and (5) a statistical analysis utilizing step-wise multiple regression to determine if a relationship exists between the kinds of parent participation and the criterion variable, student achievement.

The descriptive analyses relating to parental involvement were supported by information obtained by the use of a questionnaire administered to parents. The questionnaire was designed by the researcher in conjunction with the Dissertation Committee, since no appropriate instrument was available. A field test of the instrument was conducted initially with fifty parents at local churches, and ultimately with 350 parents who have children in secondary schools. This field test was used to validate the questionnaire by making changes to questions that were reported to be vague or inappropriate. The questionnaire was distributed to a 10 percent stratified, random selection of parents at each selected secondary urban school. Additionally, documentation of the criterion variable was available from school records in the form of grade point averages and composite scores on the SRA Achievement Test Battery.

Statistical analyses were made available by using a program from the Statistical Analysis System (SAS), Step-wise Multiple Regression, to determine if a relationship exists between the aforementioned variables related to parent participation and the criterion variable, student achievement.

The results of this study are significant for the purpose of broadening the scope of knowledge related to the "Effective Schools Research," with emphasis on the correlation of parent participation to student achievement in urban school settings.

## DEDICATION

"Three Men Plus One"

At this point in my academic career, I am emotionally divided between the struggle of fulfilling the requirements for the doctoral degree and the ecstacy of having conquered one of the major "mountains of my professional career." And while I am naturally positively moved by this accomplishment, I realize that it was not I, but "Three Men Plus One" who made this experience possible.

Since I can remember, my family has maintained a very close relationship with the Christian church. While we did not have a number of material assets, we were extremely rich in our faith in the love and grace of Jesus Christ. It was this relationship with Christ that made it possible for me to overcome many of life's adversities. It was this relationship that enabled me to have hope during times of failure, contentment in times of despair, peace in times of hostility and love in times of loneliness. For His grace, I dedicate this work.

Gold and silver had not the late Horace Worrell, my father. Nevertheless, his legacy to me was so very valuable. For you see, he left me a will to achieve. Only in spirit can my father enjoy this part of my life. But, for the gift of determination, I dedicate this work.

Ray Deans is my husband, the father of my two daughters, the leader of our family and my biggest supporter. During my marriage, he has unselfishly sacrificed many personal pleasures, professional goals and social activities. Were it not for his sharing in my goal and standing by me when others had neither the desire nor the inclination, this accomplishment would not have been possible. For his profound devotion and abiding love, I dedicate this work.

My mother is Ruther Worrell. Ruther "cared for me, when I could not care for myself." She was always there, always giving her best and always praying when my needs exceeded her talents. For her prayers and personal care, I dedicate this work.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I have always been fascinated by the joys that come with learning. For this reason, I became a teacher. I wanted to make a change in and contribute to the education of our youth. I wanted to make a difference in their lives. I later found, however, that this could not be accomplished with my former training. This led to my seeking advanced degrees. Along the way, I have been introduced to many new and challenging situations. So to those whose experiences have made me wiser, I thank you.

I am especially grateful to the distinguished members of my dissertation committee, Dr. Maurice Berube, professor, Old Dominion University; Dr. Jack Robinson, professor, Old Dominion University; and Dr. Carlton Brown, Dean of Education, Hampton University, Hampton, Virginia. Their most helpful suggestions and recommendations are reflected throughout the text. Equally important, their concern and guidance were so valuable in adding direction and clarity to this research effort.

In today's world, little happens without the involvement of a computer. In developing and presenting the statistical results of this research, Mr. Nizam Uddin was instrumentai in coding, inputting and generating the results of my findings. His knowledge of computer programming and ability to apply that

knowledge to the demands of this research project were superior. Not once was he too busy to assist or too tired to try again when something didn't go as planned. He was genuinely supportive of my research effort.

I could not possibly name the individuals throughout the years who have inspired and helped me to "climb" higher mountains. Mr. Ray Deans, my husband, has been through it all with patience that surpasses any imaginable. I also wish to acknowledge those individuals who authorized my research in both the Portsmouth and Norfolk School Divisions; Mrs. Delores Plummer, who served as the facilitator and research assistant with never tiring efforts for one of the high schools; Ms. Eileen Strickland, who has served as my typist and mentor in using the computer; and Mrs. Janet McKenzie, who has used her critical reading skills extensively.

Finally, but with no less intensity of emotions, I thank my two daughters, LaToya and Raynelle, for their sacrifices of my time, energy and parenting, as well as for the many weekends and holidays they spent with me in the library.

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

Public schools in the United States have been given the responsibility to effect positive solutions to a wide range of problems for today's youth. This range includes solutions to personal, social, and political problems.

The primary goal of schools is to provide an environment in which students can learn. However, there are many extraneous issues, such as personal, social and political problems, that dilute this focus in the schools. The Effective Schools Research has suggested ways to maintain this focus, as well as ways to improve student achievement.

The Effective Schools Research asserts that there are schools that are effective and those that are ineffective in improving student achievement. The schools that are effective in improving student achievement exhibit specific characteristics that have been documented in formal written evaluations of students. There is evidence from the research that many of the effective schools did not always provide the appropriate climate to enhance student achievement; therefore, the suggestion is that other schools can be transformed into effective schools. Ineffective schools refer to those whose students score significantly below average by formal assessment tools. The

Effective Schools Research has established that those schools that are ineffective do not have to continue to provide inadequate service to their students.[1] Edmonds indicated, "An affective school then, is one in which the children of the poor are at least as well-prepared in basic school skills as the children of the middle class."[2] This definition suggests that schools need to place special emphasis on improving student achievement for the poor. There are many scholars who believe that most schools do not adequately address the needs of economically depressed children. For example, Brookover and Erickson say: "In order to understand the educational process in any society, we must first understand the social environment within which learning occurs."[3] Conflict occurs between the social environment of economically depressed students and the educational process used by the schools to educate them. In the United States today, most schools are operated for and by middle and upper middle class citizens. The schools are not serving the entire population; rather, they are attending to the needs demanded within their socioeconomic strata. Children of the affluent are provided privileges with resources such as the use of libraries, tutors, parents with higher levels of educational training, arts and humanities centers, and an assortment of varied experiences. These privileges afford them the opportunity to learn in settings other than schools, while at the same time allowing these experiences to enhance the learning that occurs within the schools. Brookover et al. elaborate further by observing that:

". . . we build our formal education program on a model that assumes that only a portion of the people can or will learn certain kinds of behavior."[4] The model used by most of our formal education system excludes the children of the poor from having many in-school experiences, as well as those social experiences to which they have no exposure. Brookover et al. describe the dilemma in which poor children find themselves:

> . . . the high schools and elementary schools also determine who will and who will not be eligible to be a banker, doctor, engineer. When a high school places a student in a special education program, a non-college preparatory program or a slow track program it is actually impeding the student's entry into some occupations and encouraging his entry into others. This allocation function of assigning students to varying occupational opportunities influences not only what the student learn but also their abilities to learn.[5]

Thus, children of the poor are removed from the multitude of resources that encourage learning, both in and out of school. The realization that resources which encourage learning are not readily available to poor children brings into focus the need for schools to re-examine their practices and become more responsive to the needs of the children of the poor. Before schools adopt this higher level of responsibility, they would be wise to first explore all aspects of the environment in order to determine ways to elevate the achievement levels of the economically deprived. Parent participation is one of those factors suggested that can elevate student achievement at the high school level.[6] The identification of parent participation as a factor does not, in the least, diminish the impact of numerous

other factors on student achievement; rather, it emphasizes that this is one of the factors that requires more research.

The Effective Schools Research proposes many specific characteristics of a school that are necessary for the school to be effective. These characteristics include: strong leadership from the principal; high expectations from faculty and staff; an orderly, relatively quiet, and pleasant atmosphere; strongly emphasized pupil acquisition of reading and math skills; development and acceptance of an accountability model; and higher levels of parent initiated involvement.[7] This research project found it necessary to briefly review each of the effective school characteristics in order to show the significance of parent participation.

Strong leadership becomes a reality when the principal is successful in having a positive and enduring impact on the faculty, staff, student and learning environment. A strong leader must make it clear that learning is fundamental to the academic process. Shoemaker and Fraser observed that:

> The distinguishing features of assertive, achievement-oriented leadership lie not in the day-to-day tasks of the principal but rather in the principal's overall performance and the direction to which he or she is committed. Assertive leadership includes both what the principal does and what the principal allows to happen.[8]

Therefore, there must be direction and leadership from the top of the educational bureaucracy to the bottom regarding positive attitudes and high expectations for students.

Shoemaker and Fraser further point out that students achieve at higher levels when there are high expectations for those students. High expectations can be realized through design of curricula that allow students to learn basic reading and math skills as well as allowances made for effective evaluation techniques in all subject areas in school.[9]

Edmonds indicated that in schools that are improving in their effectiveness, teachers are more accountable for the learning process. However, he stated that the research is not clear on the subject of parental involvement.[10] Parental involvement is an undocumented area of research that motivates the present study in the area of parent participation as a variable related to effective schools and student achievement.

Student achievement continues to be the ultimate objective of the public education system. Learning is formally measured in terms of various achievement scores. Acceptable achievement scores indicate that the primary goal of education has been accomplished. Thus, with public education operating as a multi-billion dollar enterprise, the responsible persons need to ensure the attainment of the primary educational goal, student achievement. Educators wish to identify tangible results for the large financial investment made by the nation's taxpayers. However, they do not want to see the cost so undermined as to cease to provide "excellence" as the main by-product. Curran, a former Director of the National Institute of Education, said, "By excellence, I mean first and foremost, higher achievement, not minimum competence. I mean higher

achievement for all children, not just for some children."[11] Curran does not assert special consideration for any particular group of students; rather, he views all students to be important in the educational process. Therefore, the researcher in the present study chose to examine parent participation as a characteristic that will allow all children to achieve at the highest level possible.

## Statement of the Problem

In the previous discussion of the Effective Schools Research, parent participation was implicated as a gray area that has not been the principal focus of prior research on the secondary school level. In order to broaden the documented base of knowledge for the Effective Schools Research, this study selected parent participation as the area of concentration. The problem statement for this study is: What is the relationship between various levels of parent participation in the educational process and student achievement? The present study has documented whether a relationship exists at the secondary level in two selected urban school settings between parent participation in the educational process and student achievement.

Traditional roles of parents in schools include chaperones for field trips, baking cookies, staffing fundraising booths, tutoring children who require remediation, etc. These parents who perform traditional roles are typically female, non-working and have middle and upper socioeconomic backgrounds. In

contrast, economically depressed students and their parents constitute a subculture of a different nature. On the issue of economically depressed parents, Fantini and Gittell point out that, while equally interested in the education of their children, these parents do not as yet, participate in such traditional ways.[12]

Brookover explains in his book, Society, Schools and Learning, that students learn in school in ways similar to those ways they learn nonacademic behavior. For example, in the subculture of poor children, adults teach the necessary survival skills to children by providing a minimal amount of material, hands-on types of experience; rather, the adults teach the children by holding high expectations for the child to learn the skills of survival within the environment. History shows that this type of teaching works for these children. Poor children learn how to protect their personal belongings, how to get food to eat, etc. In contrast, schools teach these same children by displaying low expectations. Schools display low expectations by placing them in basic level classes and providing them with the minimal level of education which results in them obtaining low-paying, labor-type positions. The schools, by default, teach them not to learn at a higher level. Thus, many of the poor, disadvantaged children never get jobs because the intervention of technology in today's marketplace reduces considerably the requirement for large numbers of unskilled or semi-skilled workers. Technological advances significantly impact the poor and especially the non-white poor.[13]

There are individuals, such as Banfield, who believe that poor children cannot learn because of an inward psychological inadequacy.[14] The belief that psychological inadequacy exists appears to be the unwritten doctrine of the ineffective schools of today. However, indifference to this "unwritten belief," empirical studies such as that explained in the book, Tally's Corner by Liebow, found that the poor do not improve themselves because of a lack of opportunity and training.[15] More pointedly, Percy W. Jenkins writes: "Class bias and racism remain entrenched in the public school system."[16] Therefore, the intent of this study, in part, to explore additional strategies and techniques that will allow for greater opportunity for underprivileged children to achieve in more schools.

Education and Poverty by Berube states: "There are some poor children who manage to use the schools and achieve some measure of worldly success."[17] Success stories of the disadvantaged provide evidence that some schools are effective in allowing optimum achievement for poor children. Rutter indicated that sound strategies, high teacher expectations of student achievement and behavior, and a pleasant climate are characteristics found in all effective schools.[18] Later in the Chicago Effective Schools Project, the research implicated "parental and community support" as correlates of effective schools.[19] However, a cause-and-effect relationship has not yet been established. The discussions related to parent participation in the past have been general and have explored its effects at the elementary school level. There are no studies in the

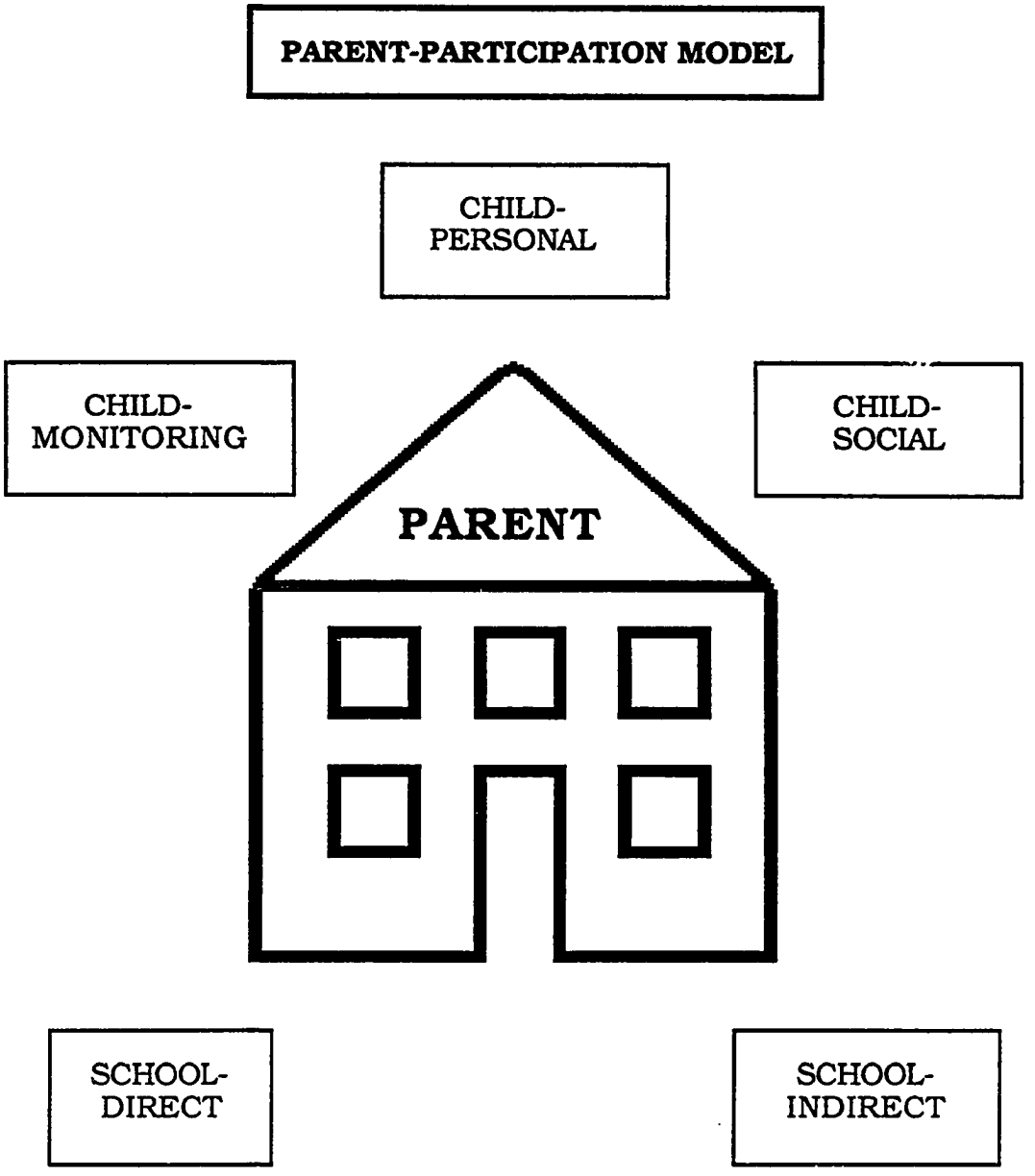
literature specific to secondary schools, parent participation in the education process, and student achievement. Thus, this researcher has chosen the topic of "parent participation" as a specific variable for consideration in the present study since past research has not isolated this particular component.

During the process of researching the topic of parental involvement, observations indicate that varying levels of parental involvement exist with parents of secondary students. The researcher believes that parents can be taught strategies and techniques to enhance interactions with their children. In order to teach them, the necessary components of a parent participation model need to be developed. The researcher believes that the model of "Parent Participation in the Educational Process," shown in Figure 1, is generic to successful parenting as it relates to the academic process. The components shown in Figure 1 represent the five varying levels of parent participation identified in the development of the parent questionnaire used for this study. They are: (1) parent/child (personal, affective); (2) parent/child (monitoring); (3) parent/child (social, school, society); (4) parent/school (direct); (5) parent/school (indirect).

First, parents interact with their children:

1. On a personal, affective level
2. On a monitoring level
   a. parental controls
   b. joint decision-making
   c. independent decision-making

Figure 1. Parent Participation in the Educational Process



3. On a social level
   a. within the family structure
   b. between the family unit and society at large
   c. between the family and the school

Second, parents interact with the school on different levels. Included are:

1. Direct parent initiated interaction with the school
   a. via phone calls to a teacher
   b. via phone calls to a counselor or other support personnel
   c. via visits for parent-teacher conferences
   d. via visits for parent-administrator conferences
   e. via visits for parent-counselor or support personnel conferences
2. Indirect parent interaction with school
   a. via phone call to any nonspecific school personnel for general information
   b. via note to teacher or counselor or support staff or administrator by child or mail
   c. via reaction to publicized school information received through varied media sources, i.e., payment of fees, early dismissal due to inclement weather conditions, etc.
   d. via membership in Parent Teacher Association.

The different levels of interaction by parents affect the student's achievement in diverse ways. For example, the following questions ascertain the "personal, affective level" of

parental involvement: During any one week, how often are you available to talk to your child about school without other interferences? In the past month, how often have you sat down and held a conversation with your child about any topic? How often do you give words of encouragement to your child relating to school? During each week, how often do you ask how the school day was for your child?

Parents interact with their children on a "monitoring level." Questions that determine this level of parental involvement include: To what extend do you inquire about the schedule of tests, exams, and other major school projects that your child is assigned? How often do you limit your child's television viewing on school nights? How often do you ask your child about daily homework assignments? How often each week do you ask your child how she or he is progressing in school? How often do you consider homework when you assign household chores?

On the "social level," the following questions are applicable: To what extent do you assist your child with scheduling his or her co-curricular activities so they will not interfere with school and homework? How often do you place any restrictions on your child's social activities to ensure completion of homework?

Parents also interact with the school either directly or indirectly. Questions that determine the direct involvement of the parent with the school include: In the past year, how frequently have you requested information specific to your son

and daughter directly from the school? How often do you attend parent-teacher conferences requested by the teacher? How often do you contact each of your child's teachers when a problem exists? How often do you contact each of your child's teachers when there is not a problem? In the past year, how often have you volunteered for any school related activity?

Indirect involvement of parents with the school is determined by asking the following questions: In the past year, how often have you sought information about school from individuals other than school personnel? In the past five years, how many times have you been a member of the PTA at your child's school? In the past five years, how often have you sought assistance for your child's educational progress from persons or agencies other than those at the school where your child attends? How often do you provide necessary supplies for your child? To what extend do you provide a quiet environment for your child to complete homework assignments? How often do you discuss the positive aspects of your child's school with him or her?

This researcher proposes the parent participation model as a comprehensive approach to parents for interacting in ways that will enhance the learning process of students. This research effort will examine the relationships presented in the model.

In order to determine the different levels of parent participation as stated above, the parents of secondary students were requested to answer a series of questions. Answers to

these questions provided a data base to correlate specific family and student characteristics.

There are family and student characteristics, as well as school-community circumstances, that affect the relationship between parent participation and student achievement. The background information supporting the inclusion of each of the characteristics will be presented in the literature review. In order to delineate some of these specific characteristics and circumstances, there is a need to state that this study included:

I. Socioeconomic: Combined Family Income Range
   - A. $ 0 - $ 9,999
   - B. $10,000 - $19,999
   - C. $20,000 - $29,999
   - D. $30,000 - $39,999
   - E. $40,000 - $49,999
   - F. $50,000 - up

II. Race
   - A. White
   - B. Black
   - C. Other _____

III. Grade

IV. Age

V. Student Employment

VI. Parent's Perception of Overall Rating

Answers were sought for how these demographic components of parent participation relate to the criterion variable, student achievement.

## Definition of Terms

Parent Participation. That interaction of parents with their child(ren) in the educational process on a personal, affective level, monitoring level, and social level as well as the direct and indirect interaction of the parent with the school. The term parent participation and parental involvement are used interchangeably in the literature and in this study.

GPA. Grade point average is the mathematical determination of a student's rank in a class as determined by the numerical grade received by the student combined with the weighted importance of that subject in the hierarchy of course offerings by a school division.

## Purpose

The purpose of this study is multifaceted: First, it characterizes the types of parental involvement between parent and child; second, the study ascertains the level of direct involvement initiated by the parent with the school; third, it reveals the levels of indirect parental involvement between parent and school; fourth and most importantly, it determines whether there is a direct relationship between these levels of parental involvement and student achievement at the two selected secondary urban schools.

Further, this study will ascertain the following information for analysis:

1. The personal level of parental involvement with the child;

2. The degree of monitoring by parents for the secondary-aged child;
3. The level of social involvement of parents with the secondary-aged child;
4. The relationships that exist between the (a) personal, (b) monitoring, and (c) social involvement of parents and the level of student achievement for the secondary school student;
5. The degree to which parents become directly involved with the school;
6. The relationship that exists between the varying degrees of direct parental involvement and student achievement;
7. The degree to which parents are indirectly involved with the school;
8. The relationship that exists between the varying degrees of indirect parental involvement and student achievement;
9. The relationship between combined income level of parents and student achievement.
10. The levels of parental involvement for students of different races; and,
11. The relationship between the levels of parent participation as determined by the questionnaire and the parents' overall perception of their participation.

The results of this study can be used for the following purposes: (1) To further substantiate the importance or lack of

importance of parent participation as a factor of "Effective Schools" at the secondary level; (2) To recommend the encouragement of parental involvement or the omission of parental involvement by public schools; (3) Further, if a positive relationship is determined, this study can serve as extrinsic motivation for parents to capitalize on their involvement as a positive force for improving schools as well as for public schools to encourage this involvement; (4) To determine the parental involvement factors that most strongly relate to improved student achievement, should they be found to exist; and (5) To provide further support for various demographic factors that affect student achievement.

Another use of this study has been the development of an instrument to quantitatively determine the level of parent participation in the secondary school setting. As the researcher sought surveys or instruments already established to ascertain the level of parent participation from the parents' perspectives, none were found. Thus, the development, field-test, validation and use of the Parent Questionnaire is one that can be used in subsequent studies for determining the level of parent participation in other similar settings.

## Justification of the Study

In a 1982 article by Curran, then Director of the National Institute of Education, he wrote, "As Director of NIE, I want us to emphasize research that will identify the impediments to quality education."[20] In order to identify such impediments,

researchers in education need to conduct systematic analyses of all areas that may possibly inhibit the educational process. So it is with this research study. This and any study that can offer the potential for improving the academic achievement of all youth will be well received by both the educational community and the general population who pay for education through tax dollars.

In the Effective Schools Research, parental involvement was only one factor suggested that would improve student achievement in schools. However, the majority of the research covered in those studies was conducted at the elementary-school level and concentrated on other factors, such as the principal as the educational leader, high teacher expectations, school climate, accountability model and acquisition of math and reading skills.[21] Thus, this factor, "parental involvement," requires further documentation at the secondary school level since in previous studies it was only implicated even at the elementary school level. This research study accomplished this goal by studying the relationship between parental involvement and student achievement at two selected secondary urban schools. For those areas where no relationship was found, then, specific issues are clarified for the selected secondary urban schools. However, for those areas where a relationship was found, then there is justification for expanded study, which may result in policy statements. The implementation of these policy statements might include formal ways that parents may become involved in secondary schools within the selected school districts.

Further, in those areas where the relationship found was negative, then policy statements can suggest the omission of formal ways of parent participation in specific areas.

This type of study is of significance in an urban area because the literature indicates that student achievement in urban areas is on the decline. Jenkins writes in a leading educational journal, Principal, that:

> Many urban principals find themselves with a staff that is predominantly white and/or middle class. Some staff members, failing to understand or value the culture of the black child, may question black children's desire or ability to learn. Their negative feelings are readily transmitted to the children, who tend to develop poor self-images and to suffer lowered motivation and achievement levels.[22]

Since there exists the probability, as the Effective Schools Research suggests, that "parental involvement" can improve achievement in urban settings, then, added research is essential if we are to verify or dismiss the use of parents as a resource to public schools in their continuing efforts to improve student achievement levels. Thus, in the areas where this study documents a positive correlation between student achievement and parental involvement at the secondary level, the study provides the foundation for more extensive, future studies within the school districts included in this study. Additional studies can provide a variety of strategies and techniques to fully utilize parents as a viable resource for improving student achievement. On the contrary, in those areas where this study reveals a negative relationship, it still proves useful to school

districts by documenting the necessity for de-emphasizing the role of parents in specific areas related to some current school functions.

The professional experiences of the researcher in a secondary school setting have supported the effectiveness of the resolution of attendance, behavioral and disciplinary problems by involving parents. Scheduling parent conferences after school and outside the traditional work day reduces the unavailability of parents and consequently, has proven to be extremely effective in increasing their involvement.

The practical significance of this study encompasses the primary goal for the existence of educational systems as we know them today, educating all youth. Even though "parent participation" is only one component suggested to improve student achievement, exploring any significant avenue that has the potential for improving student achievement is deserving of concentrated study. Failure to achieve the goal of educating all youth increases society's illiteracy rate, which in turn, can weaken the nation as a whole.

## Limitations of the Study

The data collected for this study emanates from two secondary schools. The two schools are located in different school districts, and both are in the state of Virginia. However, since Virginia's school districts act as independent entities for the most part, comparisons are not always symmetrical. Thus, comparisons between schools will not be a part of this study.

One high school is located in Norfolk, Virginia; the other in Portsmouth, Virginia. Both schools are located in urban school district settings. The demographic characteristics of the schools are similar and the study includes students from grades nine through twelve.

An additional limitation to the study is in the method of data collection. Even though the researcher selected a true, stratified, random sample in each school, the response rate of parents can alter the make-up of the random sample. According to Borg and Gall, "When some subjects refuse to participate in a study, the remaining subjects no longer constitute a random sample, because persons who agree to participate are likely to be different from those who do not."[23] Thus, when the Parent Questionnaires were distributed, respondents may form a specific "type of parent" rather than a representative group. However, since the researcher is aware of this possibility, follow-up measures were intensified to ensure a higher response rate.

To further validate the level of achievement, the researcher has chosen to use the standardized test scores obtained from the SRA tests in addition to using the students' grade point averages. Some school districts administer alternate forms of the SRA tests each year to its secondary students; others administer this test bi-annually. These differences in test administration will give data for the students at different chronological ages and at different grade levels.

Generalizability of the study beyond the present selected secondary schools will hold the constraints of the particular

demographics of selected high schools. However, by including two different schools in two different school districts, the results will be given greater credibility by educators analyzing this study.

Additionally, it is appropriate to note the national climate at the time the study is being conducted as it relates to education. This study is conducted at a time when education is being subjected to considerable scrutiny by the general public, as well as educators. For example, in the state of Virginia, the Standards of Learning have been mandated for implementation by each local school division. Similarly, federal departments are imposing more demands on the public education system such as the teaching of sex education, AIDS education, etc. Such social pressures contribute to the decline of student achievement as measured by standardized tests. However, if the standardized tests were expanded to include these recent topics, there may be some improvement in achievement scores. Therefore, this study will have served academia and the public since a means for enhancing achievement has been established.

## Summary

Much of the scrutiny of the American educational system has resulted in widespread recommendations for improvement by schools and educators. Positive scrutiny is, without doubt, an accepted direction of professional energies. However, schools and educators do not exist outside the realm of the total society. Consequently, schools must involve all other aspects of society in

the resolution of problem areas. The educational system can use its greatest strength, the existing highly competent organizational hierarchy, to serve as liaison to attract and incorporate other elements of society in attaining the ultimate goal of educating all youth. This research has chosen the exploration of parental involvement as a factor contributing to the basic educational process of youth in order to elevate the level of learning in the schools. Therefore, this dissertation will provide both theoretical and statistical data regarding the importance of parent participation at the secondary school level at two selected urban high schools.

## ENDNOTES

[1]Ronald R. Edmonds, "Some Schools Work and More Can," Social Policy 9 (March/April 1979):28.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Wilbur B. Brookover and Edsel L. Erickson, Society, Schools and Learning (Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 1969), p. 1.

[4]Ibid., 33.

[5]Ibid., 36-37.

[6]Ronald R. Edmonds, p. 32.

[7]Ibid., 29-30.

[8]John Shoemaker and Hugh W. Fraser, "What Principals Can Do: Some Implications From Studies of Effective Schooling," Phi Delta Kappan 63 (November 1981):180.

[9]Ibid., 182.

[10]Ronald R. Edmonds, p. 30.

[11]Edward A. Curran, "If the Objective is Learning," American Education 18 (April 1982):15.

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# CHAPTER II

## REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The present study hypothesized a relationship between parent participation in the educational process and student achievement. Parent participation represents the main predictor variable; student achievement represents the primary criterion variable. Studies have suggested parent participation as one aspect of ensuring improved student achievement.[1] Still, more systematic research, with the primary goal to study parent participation at the high school level, is needed. The present body of research is designed to provide data concerning the relationship between parent participation in the educational process and student achievement at the secondary school level.

Most of the Effective Schools Research presents a case to ensure improved student achievement for all youth by asserting specific characteristics within the schools. Numerous studies have documented the validity of these characteristics.[2] In contrast, other studies suggest factors outside the schools that may affect student achievement as well.[3] The literature provides specific discussion on many of these factors; but, more information is needed on the subject of parent participation as a viable resource for improving student achievement.

Factors related to improving student achievement both inside and outside the schools, are discussed in this literature review. Included are the Effective Schools Research, race, disadvantaged youth, values, student employment, family factors and parent participation. All of these are independent variables that the literature review proposes to affect the dependent variable, student achievement, to some degree.

## Student Achievement

The Effective Schools Research has identified characteristics of schools that enhance student achievement. The absence of all or some of these characteristics in some schools can impede student achievement. There are two classifications of schools identified by this body of research; they are effective and ineffective. The effective schools are those that enhance student achievement; ineffective schools do not allow all students to achieve. Edmonds' definition of an "effective school" provides additional insight into the issue of student achievement. He states, "An effective school then, is one in which the children of the poor are at least as well-prepared in basic school skills as the children of the middle class."[4] This definition alludes to the possibility that some children actually achieve in schools; whereas, others do not. What, then, are these identified characteristics that allow all types of students, whether poor, middle class or upper class, to learn. They include: strong leadership from the principal; high expectations from faculty and staff; an orderly, relatively quiet and pleasant atmosphere; strongly emphasized pupil acquisition

of reading and math skills, development and acceptance of an accountability model; and higher levels of parent initiated involvement.[5] Even though these characteristics were discussed briefly in Chapter I, it is important to further explain these as necessary factors contributing to student achievement.

Rutter said, "The 'atmosphere' of any particular school will be greatly influenced by the degree to which it functions as a coherent whole, with agreed ways of doing things which are consistent throughout the school and which have the general support of all staff."[6] "Atmosphere" provides the setting in which learning takes place. The principal in the school has ultimate leadership in creating and maintaining the type of "atmosphere" that encourages learning. If this type of leadership is absent from a school, then the staff does not function as a "coherent whole" and, consequently, it does not give general support to educational practices and policies that encourage improved student achievement. Therefore, each school that chooses "effectiveness" as its goal, also chooses a strong principal to bring this goal to fruition. Some methods by which a principal can exhibit strong leadership include: holding teachers accountable to achieving well-established instructional goals, ensuring the implementation of policies consistently to teachers and to students, acting as an advocate for proper supplies and materials for instructional purposes, encouraging professional growth and ethics via model and information, providing a positive and concerned approach to the community, serving on committees that will allow input for curriculum development and adaptation,

etc.[7] This is only a partial list of the numerous actions and characteristics that a principal must reflect if the individual is to function as a strong educational leader.

High expectations from faculty and staff represent another component from the Effective Schools Research which serves to enhance student achievement. One prime example of teacher expectations and the effects on student achievement was shown in a study described in Pygmalion in the Classroom by Rosenthal and Jacobson. They deliberately falsified test scores and placed previously low-achieving students in classes and allowed teachers to believe that they were high-achievers. They also placed high-achievers in classes and informed teachers that they were low-achievers. The self-fulfilling prophecy of teacher expectations was shown in the results of the experiment. The previously low-achieving students made remarkable gains in achievement by the end of the experiment; whereas the previously high-achieving students did not make the academic gains they had made in the past.[8] Even though this was a rather unorthodox type of study, it clearly illustrates that students live "up-to" or "down-to" the expectations of classroom teachers. In an article in American Education, Good states that: "It is known, then, that some teachers treat students believed to be less capable in ways that differ substantially from the ways they interact with high achievers."[9] This observation has been documented repeatedly in similar studies.[10] Therefore, there is definite evidence that teacher expectations can improve or lower student achievement in our schools today.

School climate is an aspect of effective schools that has proven to be important. In order for students to learn, they must feel safe. Further, sufficient order must be maintained to promote a climate conducive to learning. It has been shown that in successful schools, the climate was enhanced by greater interaction between teachers and students and between administrators and students. Instead of allowing each teacher and administrator to possess ultimate autonomy, the two levels of educators shared ideas on the improvement of instruction and implementation of policies and procedures conducive to an optimum learning environment.[11] Therefore, effective schools are better prepared to offer this type of quiet, orderly environment which acts as a catalyst for improved student achievement.

Schools that require rigorous work and more on-task activities are more effective than laissez-faire school settings. Schools that emphasize greater acquisition of academic skills have policies such as increased homework. Walberg, et al. indicated their findings on homework by explaining the difference in homework practices between American and the Japanese. Estimations suggest that the Japanese high school diploma is equivalent to the American Baccalaureate Degree because students dedicate approximately fifty two hours per week to school, homework and tutoring in contrast to the thirty four hours invested by American students. Other estimations indicate that Americans spend only about one-sixth the time at home on homework in contrast to the amount of time spent watching

television. The same article by Walberg, et al. indicates: "Homework increases learning by increasing its length."[12] Thus, extending the school day into home via homework has been shown to improve student achievement.

The area of "rigorous work" also is apparent in the amount of time spent on teaching and learning in the classroom. It has been shown by Goodlad in A Place Called School, that the more time spent on learning in the classroom the higher the level of student learning. Goodlad points out that schools need to examine the proportion of time spent on assemblies, announcements on the public address system, collecting money for numerous activities, the number of student appointments with the counselor during scheduled class time, etc.[13] Accordingly, these and similar observations form a basis for schools to develop policies and procedures that will maximize academic productivity during the school day.

According to Edmonds, schools need an accountability model. Such a model would provide for evaluating the results of teaching periodically for the purpose of documenting student learning. He points out that teachers and administrators in effective schools believe in the establishment of an accountability model by choosing a battery of tests to determine achievement; and using the results of such tests to identify specific learning objectives. Further, effective schools use such information as a basis for curriculum modification and implementation. Ineffective schools reject the premise that an accountability model can improve student learning.[14] Consequently, Good

argues that schools must institute written policies which reflect organizational support for improved student learning. Further, numerous school districts are implementing specific models for evaluating teachers to determine their effectiveness with the types of students they teach.[15] Implementation of such models is a relatively new dimension in the teacher evaluation process and holds some promise for motivating teachers to remain student-oriented in their instructional methodologies.

Parent participation is the last factor associated with the Effective Schools Research. In a study conducted by the United States Department of Education, the conclusions indicated: "Parent involvement in almost any form improves student achievement."[16] The researcher in the present study has chosen to include the parental involvement issue as the primary independent variable. Therefore, a full discussion will follow on the subject of "parent participation."

Other areas of interest to consider that were not directly included as factors in the Effective Schools Research are race, disadvantaged youth, values, student employment and family factors.

Race has been shown to be a factor that obstructs achievement levels for students. Research in the July 1986 issue of Sociology of Education shows that ". . . the most significant predictor of achievement was RACE. . . ."[17] This statement raises the questions: What is it about race that affects student achievement? Is there a genetic predisposition to higher achievement for different races? Are there other factors that

affect the lower levels of achievement for minority students? Even though there is not one clear response to either question because different circumstances can produce different responses, researchers have been able to identify various interrelated factors that may explain the concept. In the same article in Sociology of Education, the authors explained:

> The finding that RACE was the strongest predictor of the achievement of single-parent children requires the interpreter to remember that a high proportion of these black single-parent families are living in poverty, and these children are adveersely affected by social conditions such as urban poverty andpoor schools.[18]

In his book, Educating the Urban Poor, Berube further documents this issue when he writes that ". . . poor children, for the most part, fail in urban classrooms."[19] Factors such as these cannot be left to occur as a function of chance. Rather, racism has to be considered. In A Piece of the Pie, written by Lieberson, there is direct evidence of institutionalized racism that still exists in our country. The degree of this racism is difficult to ascertain as it exists in the schools; however, the study in Lieberson's book was able to show that teachers and administrators respond differently to minority students.[20] Student achievement for these minority students is affected. The degree to which the achievement of minority students is affected cannot be determined because each situation is different. But, repeated studies and observations have shown that race is a factor that influences student achievement.[21] Therefore, the present study included the variable, race, as one aspect of analysis.

A variable that is intertwined with race is socioeconomic status. According to Brookover, et al., children of the poor are limited in climbing the ladder of success because schools often place them in slow learning tracks, which do not allow them to break the vicious circle of poverty.[22]

Even though many of the other factors relating to student achievement have alluded specifically to disadvantaged youth, it is necessary to have a separate discussion on the issue of disadvantaged youth. When the term "disadvantaged student" is used, it encompasses many different characteristics of the child, the family and the environment. Different studies may use one or a combination of these varied characteristics to discuss the disadvantaged youth. Nonetheless, there is agreement on some issues. One area of agreement was pointed out in a study conducted at the University of Alabama's Institute of Higher Education Research and Services. It was found that:

> Disadvantaged students accept with significantly higher percentages than those of advantaged ones, the statement that their fate will depend more or less upon certain elements beyond their controls.' This finding was interpreted as that of disadvantaged students leaving themselves to the flow of events more than advantaged students.[23]

If this is true, then, one can surmise that the achievement of disadvantaged students in ineffective schools will delve to an all time low. The mere fact that in these ineffective schools, teachers and administrators respond to these students differently, it reinforces the low self-images and perpetuates the belief by these students that they cannot succeed.[24] When disadvantaged

students leave themselves to the flow of events, then the question arises: Who directs this flow of events? If this flow of events is left to school personnel, then, based on extensive research, these students will be placed in classes that will not teach them to elevate their economic or educational levels beyond those required for the more menial positions.[25] Such a systematic academic approach to learning perpetuates the phenomenon that disadvantaged youth will remain in the poverty chain to which they and their families are linked.

The continuation of generation after generation of disadvantaged youth and families is evident in schools and in society as a whole. Thus, as Walberg writes: "It would not be scholarly to accept these [disadvantaged] students as having equal chances to achievement with the advantaged. . . ."[26] Further, Walberg offers reasons for the disadvantaged youth's inability to have equal chances with the advantaged and a possible solution to reducing the disparity:

> Such findings as lower scores on various tests, lower achievement levels. . . , lower self concepts, lower educational aspiration levels, and somewhat limited vocational preferences seem to point to the necessity of designing a curriculum aimed to meet the specific educational and various other needs of disadvantaged students.[27]

There definitely has to be a reason for disadvantaged youth to exhibit such depressed measures on these varied areas of educational achievement tests and social behavioral scales. A curriculum can be specifically tailored to improve the plight of disadvantaged youth. However, such a curriculum would require

broad considerations. The inclusion of parents can be an integral component in the final draft of such a broad curriculum. The U.S. Department of Education suggests action prior to extending the curriculum to such broad parameters. In a study funded by the Department, the researchers found that: "If disadvantaged students are to believe that they can succeed outside school, they must also be challenged to achieve success in school."[28] Thus, if we can get these ideas accepted and in place at the forefront of curriculum development by school divisions, the challenge for disadvantaged youth to achieve can be addressed successfully both inside and beyond the boundaries of the classroom. Thus, the design of a curriculum for disadvantaged students will be an on-going and monumental challenge that is yet to be accomplished.

There are moral and ethical values that need to be considered for predicting influences on student achievement. For example, according to the U.S. Department of Education's study, Values and Educational Success Among Disadvantaged Students:

> For each disadvantaged group, parents of superior students were more likely to monitor their homework, think their children should attend college, and converse with them about the children's experiences. [S]tronger traditional values were associated with greater academic success. It [values] denotes a set of motivational variables for students (and their parents and friends) that influence their school achievement and both in-school and out-of-school behavior. Comparatively speaking, . . . we find that values, on the average, have an effect on the school success of white and black students which is twice the size of the effect of SES [socioeconomic status].[29]

The training of parents in appropriate ways to participate with their disadvantaged child can emphasize those values that are important for the child to elevate his or her learning in the classroom. The parents of disadvantaged students do have some of the same hopes, desires and values; rather, it is their limited expression and emphasis of these values because of their lack of knowledge regarding appropriate techniques and the impact of such values on their children.[30] Thus, a forum to clarify and teach the importance of values is necessary for the children and families of the disadvantaged, and fundamental to student achievement.

Homework and television viewing are two interrelated factors affecting student achievement. Keith, et al. reported in Educational Psychology, that if parents would increase their children's homework time by decreasing the amount of time they are allowed to watch television, then this would improve student achievement.[31] This study was specific to senior high school students and supports the importance of the "monitoring level" of parent participation described in the researcher's model, "Parent Participation in the Educational Process." (Appendix B) Additionally, there is a difference between advantaged and disadvantaged youth as it relates to TV watching and homework. This finding was described in a study by Searles, et al. and was reported in the Journal of Reading. The authors observed that "Members of groups typically considered disadvantaged, including residents of poor urban areas, Blacks, and those whose parents have less education, tend to watch more TV than the

national average."[32] This lends itself to correlate with other research findings that indicate lower achievement scores for disadvantaged youth. Specific to reading, the same research by Searls et al. shows, "For 17 year olds, reading performance increases as amount of time spent on homework increases, with those doing over 2 hours of homework showing the best reading."[33] Therefore, more homework and less TV clearly offers a firm foundation for improved student achievement.

Keith, et al. conclude:

> If they [educators, students and parents] are serious about improving American students' academic performance, administrators can review homework practices, teachers can assign more homework and provide feedback for completed homework, and parents and students can ensure that assigned homework is completed.[34]

A strong homework policy is a necessary ingredient for improved student achievement. However, for disadvantaged youth, implementation of such a policy would have to be modified. One exciting occurence in this area is the existence, in some school divisions, of a telephone help-line for students to call in the evenings for assistance with homework in the academic areas.[35] Such a program may be supported and coordinated by the local Parent-Teacher Association unit. Publicity through the appropriate media to reach parents of disadvantaged students is of utmost importance, as well as, consistency of availability of such a service.

On the topic of student employment, Schill collected survey data from 4,587 high school students that indicated that

employed students were more likely than unemployed students to: have higher grade point averages; be from higher socioeconomic families; or, have a parent employed in a higher-status occupation.[36] This study indicates that student employment has a positive effect on student achievement. This is in contrast to the observations of this researcher. Observations have shown that students who work have attendance problems, lower grades on classwork and homework and have negative social and personal interactions at school. The researcher's experiences have been limited to those disadvantaged students who work for the compensation as opposed to those other students who work because of the values derived from the work experience. In either case, further research is needed in this area. The present study has included this factor for analysis.

In summary, there are numerous factors that affect student achievement, both inside and outside the school. However, the research is often contradictory or inadequate in some areas. Thus, the present research study will support past research in some areas and clarify factors in other areas that may lend themselves to contradiction.

## Parent Participation

The predictor variable in this research study is parent participation. The objective is to determine if a relationship exists between parent participation and student achievement. In the preceding section, the literature has shown some effects of family factors and school factors on student achievement. This

section will bring into focus the main concept of the study, which is the relationship of parent participation and student achievement.

Parent participation, as used in this study, refers to the collection of interactions of parents with their child(ren) on various levels as well as parents and their interactions with the school on various levels in a public school setting.

Walberg asserts: "The 12 years of school, each year made up of 180 six-hour days, add up to 12,960 hours, or about 13% of the waking life of a youngster's first 18 years."[37] This mathematical representation of the small percentage of time spent at school in contrast with the extremely large percentage of time spent at home or at least under the influence and control of the home speak to the realization that the home plays a valuable part in the learning process of students. Walberg further asserts, "Through the formative years--until the end of high school--parents nominally control 87% of a student's waking time."[38] This raises the questions: Does public education allow its process to extend into homes? How can any school principal or educational organization deny parents the rights and privileges to participate in the educational process? Jenkins answers these questions in an article found in Principal, by stating:

> America's public schools have traditionally acted on the tacit assumption that parents--and poor parents in particular--should be excluded from participation in education policymaking. [M]any urban parents are denied a

> meaningful role in making policy for the educational institutions that serve their children.[39]

A conclusion can be drawn that if parent participation does affect student achievement positively, as indicated by Jenkins, then public schools contribute to lowered student achievement of the children of the urban poor by excluding parents from involvement. As suggested earlier, a broad curriculum designed and implemented specifically to be responsive to the needs of the disadvantaged student would incorporate the participation of parents. Such incorporation will serve to elevate these students' achievement levels, self concepts, educational aspirations and vocational preferences.[40] Parent participation by disadvantaged families is a long-range goal rather than an immediate, concrete reality. However, it is possible that by continued policy changes developed by educational researchers and promoted by new administrators with innovative ideas, parents of the disadvantaged will begin to contribute to their children's academic achievement.

In contrast to the above report concerning parents participating in schools, Walberg shows that some parents do participate and it makes a difference. He states: "School-parent partnership programs aimed at improving academic conditions in the home have an outstanding record of success in promoting achievement."[41] If educators could be convinced to accept this statement as truth, then, putting this fact into practice would be a top priority item for the schools since their primary by-product is continuous and improved student achievement. Themes, such as

this one on parental involvement in schools, can overshadow many of the other family variables discussed earlier that may affect student achievement adversely. Walberg affirms this point by asserting: "What might be called 'the curriculum of the home' predicts academic learning twice as well as the socioeconomic status of families."[42]

There are a few instances wherein parents and educators have come together, according to Seeley. Thus partnerships have been established. These parents and schools are working toward the common goal of improved student achievement.[43] Even poor parents are interested in attaining the common goal of improved student achievement. A study funded by the National Committee for Citizens in Education and edited by Henderson states: "Like all concerned parents, urban parents consider education a high priority in the lives of their children, but for the poor and minorities, education holds that extra promise of upward mobility as well."[44] Berube writes: ". . . [O]ne must not overlook the testimonies of those born in poverty who were able to rise above it with the help of schooling."[45] Examples given by Berube in his book, Educating the Urban Poor, include Alfred Kazin, Dick Gregory, Claude Brown, Mary E. Mebane and Richard Rodriguez. These examples portray a common thread. Each had a "parent figure" to multiply the effects of the educational process.[46]

Alfred Kazin was Jewish and from the ghetto in Brownsville, New York, whose father worked only temporary jobs as a painter. In spite of the poverty he experienced as a child, Alfred Kazin used education as his vehicle to success. He went to

City College and found success in a career in the academics and literary writing.[47]

Dick Gregory, a black comedian and civil rights activist, lived in poverty as a child. After his father abandoned the family, they lived on welfare. However, an athletic scholarship presented Gregory the opportunity to obtain a college education.[48] This kind of academic opportunity is available to many poor and minority students whose grades may not have been superior. Nonetheless, the opportunity to achieve was provided through education.

Claude Brown was a black who grew up in poverty in Harlem. Even though his parents did not hold the hope that Brown would someday be successful, he did have a parent figure in a friend who held high expectations for him. After reform school, Brown chose to return to secondary school, college and law school; after which, he wrote, Manchild in the Promised Land. He became a success.[49]

Mary E. Mebane is a black female who lived in poverty as a child in North Carolina during the Great Depression. With the help of an encouraging aunt, Mary E. Mebane graduated with honors from undergraduate school and went on to attain a M.A. and a Ph.D. She succeeded.[50]

Richard Rodriguez represents one last example. Because of his mother's never-tiring support, Rodriguez overcame the poverty inheritance from his father's low-paying jobs. By attending college on scholarship, he earned a Ph.D. in English from Berkley.[51]

This researcher observes from these brief examples of academic achievement that in spite of poverty-laden childhood experiences, parents or a parent-figure is an intricate necessity for the success of all children. This area of parental involvement may occur in a nontraditional way; but, must exist for students to achieve in school. Since achievement by poor students is obviously depressed, this area of parent participation could provide one basic component for elevating their achievement test scores.

Why is it that some parents do not participate in educational affairs? Research by Henderson says, ". . . for some urban parents, an active role in the schools has been denied them for so long that they need more than mere encouragement to step into that role."[52] As a result of this long-standing denial, schools will have to provide a new medium and create new strategies for this parent participation role to develop. Development of parent participation strategies will require innovation and the involvement of individuals within the school division that have both the experience and professional preparation through a multicultural curriculum to interact with these urban parents.

In today's society, public schools are subjected to so much scrutiny until they must utilize all of the assistance possible. Walberg et al. identify a "home curriculum" that can improve the productivity of the school curriculum:

> The home curriculum includes informal parent-child conversations about everyday events, encouragement and discussion of leisure reading, monitoring and joint analysis of

> televiewing, deferral of immediate gratification to accomplish long-range goals, expressions of affection and interest in the child's academic and personal growth, and caprice and serendipity. This curriculum, like the one in school, varies in both amount and quality; both are important and multiply one another's effects.[53]

Thus, if the home curriculum multiplies that of the school, then the goal of improved academic achievement may be attained through involving those parents in the school's activities.

Rowell reported that parents may also be able to help improve student achievement by exercising their rights. "The parental right to be informed about the teachers and principal is the essential starting point in building parental confidence in a school."[54] Parental confidence is important so that parents will support the programs, both academic and co-curricular. Parental support of programs generates a feeling to the children that education is important. The feeling that education is important, of course, can improve student attitudes and concurrently, student achievement in education.

The same article in the February 1981 issue of Phi Delta Kappan shared a different perspective: "Specifically, parents have the right to commend teachers and principals in a way that will make a positive difference in their standing in the profession and the system."[55] Commendations for school personnel would motivate teachers and principals to continue to improve their abilities in order to deliver the best possible education to today's youth.

Other ways in which parent participation influences student achievement are presented by many authors: Comer says: (1) Parental involvement can send out a positive image to other parents and the entire community. (2) The parent group can be responsible for a variety of programs in support of the school climate and achievement goals. (3) The presence of parents in positive roles in the schools transmits to the children that the school and its function are important.[56] The National Committee for Citizens in Education reports that a school with an active PTA chapter will have higher student achievement.[57] Moles says that parent-school contacts in which parents learn about their children's school performance and ways they can be of assistance, such as homework and tutoring, will show the students that everyone cares.[58] There are numerous studies, expert opinions, observations, etc. that indicate the importance of parent participation; however, clear statistical support is needed on this issue at the secondary school level. Therefore, this study provides the data necessary to establish whether parent participation plays a role in student achievement at the secondary school level.

## Summary

The review of the literature supports the influence of many factors on student achievement. Many of these factors can be described as a component of the concept of parent participation. For example, parents interact with their children on a personal level. The literature points out that a great

majority of a child's awakened hours are spent with parents and in the home in contrast to only a fraction spent in school. Such time discrepancy between home and school shows that the personal interaction between parent and child has to have an effect on the child's academic development. Further, on a monitoring level, parents affect their children in various ways. Children of working mothers tend to watch more television and read less. Reading time versus time spent watching television is a direct result of monitoring versus lack of monitoring. The lack of monitoring allows the child to refrain from engaging in activities that promote enhanced school achievement. The literature also shows that when parents show interest and caring related to education, it shows the children that parents expect them to do well in school. Consequently, the higher expectations encourage the children to achieve better in school.

From the perspective of the social level of parent participation, parents who have higher levels of education and higher job status tend to affect their children in a positive direction. These children tend to demonstrate higher levels of achievement.

The interaction of the parent with the school is also important. The literature suggests that parent initiated communications with the school have a positive influence on the academic achievement of the children. Also, parental membership in PTA positively affects the achievement of students.

All of these factors are interrelated with parental involvement. The variables are so interrelated that the researcher will have to be aware of the problem of collinearity in analyzing the statistical data. Therefore, this research topic gives additional support to the Effective Schools Research by examining many of the variables that have already been discussed in the literature as well as providing additional information on the subject by studying these variables at the senior high school level.

Additionally, this research study establishes the relationship between parent participation and student achievement measured on two different scales, SRA test scores and GPA. Thus, this study will contribute to the body of knowledge relating to parent participation at the secondary level.

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[43]Ibid., p. 400.

[44]National Committee for Citizens in Education, edited by Anne Henderson, "Parent Participation--Student Achievement: The Evidence Grows," 1981, p. 19.

[45]Maurice Berube, Education and Poverty, p. 26.

[46]Ibid., pp. 26-31.

[47]Ibid., p. 26.

[48]Ibid., p. 28.

[49]Ibid., pp. 29-30.

[50]Ibid., p. 30.

[51]Ibid., pp. 30-31.

[52]National Committee for Citizens in Education, edited by Anne Henderson, p. 21.

[53]Herbert J. Walberg, "Homework's Powerful Effects on Learning," p. 79.

[54]J. Cy Rowell, "The Five Rights of Parents," Phi Delta Kappan 62 (February 1981):441.

[55]Ibid., p. 441.

[56]James P. Comer, "Home-School Relationships As They Affect the Academic Success of Children," Education and Urban Society 15 (May 1984):333.

[57]National Committee for Citizens in Education, edited by Anne Henderson, p. 3.

[58]Oliver C. Moles, "Synthesis of Recent Research on Parent Participation in Children's Education," Educational Leadership 40 (November 1982):46.

# CHAPTER III

## METHODOLOGY

One of the purposes of this research was to identify and examine the level of parental involvement as reported by the parents of secondary students at two selected urban high schools. After assessing the level of parental involvement, a correlation was made between parental involvement and student achievement. The level of parental involvement was determined by questionnaires completed by parents. Questionnaires were distributed to a stratified, random sample of parents of secondary students at each of the two high schools in the selected school divisions. The stratification was used for the purpose of ensuring information from all grade levels since the number of ninth grade students in one school was double the number of seniors. The stratification process eliminates the over-representation of ninth graders in the study. This is important if the assumption is true that the level of parent participation differs with the grade level of the child. Questionnaire data were used to: (1) Ascertain the level of parental involvement by parents of students in grades nine through twelve; (2) solicit demographic information of the student and family; and (3) obtain the parents' overall rating of his/her own perception of involvement with the child and school system.

Data for the criterion variable in this study were taken directly from the school records. Student achievement, which is the criterion variable, is determined by using the grade point average (GPA), calculated by the Data Processing Department at the selected high schools. The grade point average reflects more specific learning in the classroom. Student achievement is also determined by using scores from the SRA Achievement Test, a component of the standardized testing program. The SRA Achievement Test scores represent the general aptitude of students. Therefore, both measures are used in order to broaden the scope of the criterion variable set.

## The Research Questions and Hypotheses

As a result of reviewing the literature on the topic of parent participation, there is some evidence that schools need parents in order to fully realize the schools' academic goals and objectives. Consistent with this perception, this research study explored the following major research question: What is the Relationship Between Parent Participation in the Educational Process and Student Achievement at Two Selected High Schools? A directional hypothesis for this major research question is: There is a positive relationship between parent participation in the educational process and the level of student achievement at the secondary level; or, The higher the level of parental involvement, the higher the level of student achievement. This research study represents a genesis in the field of parent participation at the secondary school level.

Answers will be sought for how the following subproblems relate to the criterion variable, student achievement. Hypotheses are proposed for each:

Subproblem I: What is the level of parent participation in the educational process of children? Hypothesis: There is a relationship between the level of parent participation and demographic factors such as race and income of parents, age, grade, employment status of child and number of children in household.

Subproblem II: Is there a relationship between the levels of parent participation, income level and student achievement? Hypothesis: There is a relationship between level of income, level of parent participation and student achievement.

Subproblem III: Is there a relationship between race, age, grade, number of children in household, student employment and the level of parent participation and student achievement? Hypotheses:

1. Hypothesis: There is a relationship between race and level of parent participation.
2. Hypothesis: There is a relationship between race and level of student achievement.
3. Hypothesis: There is a relationship between the age or grade of the student, the level of parent participation and student achievement.
4. Hypothesis: There is a relationship between number of children in household, level of parent participation and student achievement.

5. Hypothesis: There is a relationship between employed students and level of parent participation and student achievement.

Subproblem IV: Is there a relationship between the parents' perceptions of their level of participation and the actual level of participation as determined by the questionnaire?
Hypothesis: There is a difference between the parents' perceptions of their participation and the actual level of participation as determined by the questionnaire.

## Design of the Study

### The Problem

The idea of initiating a major research effort on the topic of parent participation emanates from the researcher's experiences as a Dean of Women. In carrying out administrative responsibilities in a high school setting, this researcher has observed that immediate results are realized when the solution to a behavioral or attendance problem is shared with those parents who are willing to accept shared ownership and interest in the problem situation. However, it is evident that all parents are not willing to be drawn into the resolution of problems that confront their children. Even though the policing role of the Dean of Women does not involve academics directly, it is evident that attendance and behavior are intertwined in the total education effort. Thus, the researcher concluded early in her formal coursework that some aspect of parent participation would be a part of the research study to be undertaken. Repeated

discussions with the advisor and other professors helped solidify the idea of exploring the relationship between parent participation in the educational process and student achievement.

This study focuses on the senior high school: What is the relationship between parent participation in the educational process and student achievement at the secondary school level? A directional hypothesis for such a study would state: There is a positive relationship between parent participation in the educational process and student achievement. Thus, the major predictor variable is parent participation and the criterion variable is student achievement.

## Selection of Subjects

The setting includes selected secondary schools located in Portsmouth and Norfolk, Virginia.

The city of Portsmouth is a port city located in the southeast corner of the state of Virginia. Portsmouth is surrounded by the cities of Suffolk, Norfolk and Chesapeake. The five high schools in the city have a combined population of approximately 8,000 students. The socioeconomic level of the selected school population ranges from average middle class to lower poverty level. The high school selected for the study has a student population of approximately 1,300. A 10 percent random sample is represented by 130 students. However, after discussion with the building principal, the decision was made to add fifty students to this 10 percent sample to ensure a minimal level of representativeness in numbers. Of the 1,300 students,

approximately 800 represent minorities and 500 represent the majority race. An administrator of this school was assigned to function as the contact person with the researcher. There was unlimited cooperation.

The city of Norfolk is also a port city and is located adjacent to the city of Portsmouth. There are five senior high schools and three alternative secondary schools in the city. The approximate population of the five secondary schools is 8,400. The selected high school for the present study has a population of approximately 1,597. This number includes approximately 734 male students and 863 female students. The black/white ratio is approximately 60/40, which results in almost 960 blacks and 600 whites. The principal of the school designated one of the counselors to assist with the distribution and collection of the questionnaires. The counselor was the facilitator in distributing and collecting the questionnaires.

The researcher decided upon a random sample, since each of the selected schools is composed of a heterogeneous group of students. The sample will be selected from each grade level, which makes it a stratified sample as well. The researcher chose to include strata in data collection because of the differential in the number of ninth graders compared to the number of seniors in each high school. Moreover, the experiences of the researcher indicates that there are considerable differences in the response rates and intensity of involvement of parents of younger students at the high school level.

The researcher obtained an alphabetical listing of all students in grades nine through twelve from each high school. By using the table of random numbers, a 10 percent sample was selected. Communication with the designee in each school encouraged the researcher to distribute a slightly higher number than the initial 10 percent sample. Therefore, the decision was made to select a 10 percent sample plus fifty at each of the high schools. After the random selection was made for each school, the list of names was examined for attrition (students who have transferred or dropped out of school were omitted). Additional names of students were selected by stratified random procedures to replace those omitted.

## Data Collection

Data collection for this study was in the form of questionnaires which sought to ascertain levels of parent participation and other demographic data. The questionnaire was designed by the researcher since efforts to locate a similar instrument used in a previous study was unsuccessful. The process began by including areas indicated in the literature review to be important aspects of parental involvement in the educational process of children. After formulation, the questionnaires were reviewed by professionals in education, such as counselors, administrators and teachers, who were in key positions to critique the ingredients of parental involvement. The final construct of the questionnaire was the result of over twelve months of revisions and adaptations originating from a review of

the literature and recommendations from the professionals. An initial field test of the instrument was conducted with fifty parents at local churches who presently have children in secondary schools. The field test served to eliminate and/or correct questions which were inappropriate, vague or confusing. Then, a second group of school counselors, administrators and teachers were invited to participate in a review of the questionnaire for its appropriateness. This process also involved the Dissertation Committee, whose individual and collective expertise contributed to the final refinement of the questionnaire. Ancillary to this list of resource persons was a retired professor at one of the local universities who had taught research and statistics for an extended period prior to retirement.

After reviews too numerous to recall, a trial mailing of 350 questionnaires was sent to parents of the urban high school where the researcher is employed. This mailing was accompanied by a letter to parents, with a parent permission slip attached for purposes of using the test scores of their children. This mailing of the questionnaire was part of the validation procedures. A copy of this letter can be found in Appendix D. Additionally, since the researcher is presently employed in a position where parental involvement is necessary, the daily experiences of the researcher aided in developing and validating the questionnaire. The final, completed instrument is found in Appendix A.

There was approximately a 50 percent return rate of the mailed questionnaires. A self-addressed stamped envelope was

provided for return of the questionnaires. After a three-week time period, post cards were mailed as a follow-up to the questionnaires requesting return. After a two-week period from the mailing of the post cards, a telephone follow-up was conducted. By this point, the researcher had received a 58 percent return of the questionnaires. This trial mailing was conducted at the school where the researcher is employed. This meant there was direct opportunity for the researcher to request that parents return the questionnaires. In spite of the repeated requests, a sufficient number of questionnaires was not returned through the mail. Having mailed the questionnaires, provided stamped, self-addressed return envelopes and followed-up with post cards and telephone calls, this researcher concluded that mailing would not achieve the return rate required for correlational research. Accordingly, the researcher chose to request schools to determine some other mode of transmission of the questionnaires. Both schools were receptive to the assignment of a support person to assist the researcher in the distribution of the questionnaires directly to the student. One school provided a guidance counselor; the other assigned an administrator.

The high school in Norfolk, Virginia chose to distribute the questionnaires through the homerooms. Since only one counselor was assigned to the research task of distributing and collecting the questionnaires, it took the counselor one complete week to get all of the questionnaires distributed the first time. Students were instructed to request that their parents complete the

questionnaire and return it to the counselor in five days. The counselor was given a Student Record Sheet (found in Appendix C) to record the student names. Each questionnaire was numbered and as each was presented to a student, the student's name was written on the Student Record Sheet beside the number corresponding to the number on the questionnaire. Because the response rate was low initially, the counselor requested questionnaires from the researcher with no numbers so that the number assigned to a student in the first distribution could be written on the blank questionnaire and sent home a second, third, etc. time. The counselor reported having to give some students a questionnaire five times. Even after repeated trials, there were many questionnaires not returned. However, because of the intensity of the efforts by the counselor, an 80 percent return rate was eventually realized.

Since an administrator of the high school in Portsmouth was assigned to distribute the initial questionnaires, the researcher was more directly involved. Over a period of a month, the researcher spent five days in the school getting students out of class to repeatedly request the return of the questionnaires. The 80 percent response rate was also achieved in Portsmouth. The same procedure of assigning numbered questionnaires to students and recording their names on a Student Record Sheet beside the corresponding number was used. Once the questionnaires were returned, the researcher was allowed to use the student records in the respective guidance departments to

obtain the grade point averages and the SRA Achievement Test scores.

For the student achievement variable, the researcher obtained the current grade point averages and SRA Achievement Test scores for all students at the selected high schools from student records. The GPA is used by numerous school divisions for purposes of ranking students as well as for nominations for scholarships. The varied uses of the GPA indicate the importance and accepted reliability of the GPA in the educational arena. The grade point average represents more specific day-to-day learning. The SRA Achievement Test Scores are used by the curriculum specialists and research team to determine whether educational objectives have been met within the system's curriculum and for comparative measures among surrounding school districts. The SRA Achievement Test scores represent general aptitude of students. Therefore, the researcher chose these two areas as measures of student achievement because of their common usage both within and outside the selected school systems, and for the purpose of broadening the scope of the criterion variable.

## Data Analysis

The major relationship that will be examined involves the relationship between parent participation and student achievement. But there are numerous other relationships that are important for a more in-depth understanding of the main issue.

As a result of the data collected, the following relationships will be examined by using stepwise multiple regression:

1. family income, level of parent participation and student achievement;
2. race, level of parent participation and student achievement;
3. grade, level of parent participation and student achievement;
4. age, level of parent participation and student achievement;
5. number of children in household, level of parent participation and student achievement; and
6. employment status of student, level of parent participation and student achievement.

The criterion variable, student achievement, was documented by two instruments, the SRA Achievement Test and GPA. The statistical package used indicated the strength of the relationships for all of the predictor variables to the criterion variable. As a resullt of using stepwise multiple regression, the researcher was able to determine whether to reject or fail to reject the null hypothesis: There is no statistical significance in the relationship between parent participation in the educational process and student achievement at the secondary school level.

Multiple regression was chosen to analyze the data because of the numerous predictor variables associated with parent participation. Sam Kash Kachigan explains:

Two key benefits to be derived from the application of regression analysis include (1) The prediction of values on a criterion variable based on a knowledge of values on predictor variables, and (2) The assessment of the relative degree to which each predictor variable accounts for variance in the criterion variable.[1]

## ENDNOTE

[1]Sam Kash Kachigan, Statistical Analysis: An Interdisciplinary Introduction to Univariate and Multivariate Methods, (New York: Radius Press 1986), p. 265.

# CHAPTER IV

## ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

One purpose of this study was to ascertain the level of parent participation by using data taken from a parent questionnaire and correlate that level of participation to student achievement as determined by grade point average and SRA Achievement Test scores. In addition to the level of parent participation, there are other demographic variables whose influences are intertwined with that of parent participation in the educational process of children. These variables include combined income, race, age, grade, number of children in household and employment status of the child. After determining the aforementioned relationships, the overall rating of the parents' perception of their level of parent participation in the educational process was correlated with the level of parent participation as determined by the parent questionnaire. Therefore, there are four phases of analysis.

The instrument used to collect the data included a Parent Questionnaire, which contained questions specific to parent participation and a Personal Data Sheet, which listed all of the demographic variables used in this correlational study. The data for student achievement were taken from the students' records

at each school. The data herein were presented using descriptive statistics, then simple correlations were made for all data, and finally, stepwise multiple regression was used to determine the relationship between parent participation in the educational process and student achievement. The .10 and .15 levels of significance were used in the stepwise multiple regression analyses of the relationship between parent participation in the educational process and student achievement.

The statistical package used was Statistical Analysis System (SAS). The analyses from this package present the appropriate frequency tables, charts, graphs, listings and correlations for the accurate interpretation based on the available raw data.

## Descriptive Analysis

In order to understand some of the presentation of the data output, an explanation of the following terms is necessary:

"Personal" represents the personal, affective level of parent to child interaction.

"Monitoring" refers to the restraints placed on children by their parents.

"Social" explains the level of interaction of the parent with the child as it relates to extra-curricular activities and their effects on school work.

"Direct" refers to parent initiated communication directly with the child's school.

"Indirect" explains the parent's interaction with individuals or media sources outside the school for the

purpose of obtaining information about the school or educational progress of the child.

"Class" indicates grade levels, nine, ten, eleven or twelve.

"Children" means number of children in household.

"Employed" means whether the child is employed outside the home.

"Rating" refers to the parents' self-assessment of their cumulative level of participation.

The first data to be presented are the frequency tables. The total number of respondents in the research study was 338. In table 1, the number of respondents in each grade level is presented.

TABLE 1

GRADE FREQUENCIES AND PERCENTAGES OF PARTICIPATING STUDENTS

| Grade | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| 9 | 89 | 26.3 |
| 10 | 79 | 23.4 |
| 11 | 85 | 25.1 |
| 12 | 85 | 25.1 |

The most respondents were from parents of students in grade nine. The least respondents were from parents of students in grade ten. However, the proportion of respondents across grade levels was comparable.

Table 2 represents the students' ages. The most respondents were from parents of seventeen year old students. The least were for ages nineteen and twenty.

TABLE 2

AGE FREQUENCIES AND PERCENTAGES OF PARTICIPATING STUDENTS

| Age | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| 12 | 1 | 0.3 |
| 13 | 4 | 1.2 |
| 14 | 58 | 17.2 |
| 15 | 53 | 15.7 |
| 16 | 76 | 22.5 |
| 17 | 104 | 30.8 |
| 18 | 31 | 9.2 |
| 19 | 9 | 2.7 |
| 20 | 2 | 0.6 |

Race is shown in table 3. There were 217 black and 114 white respondents. The respondents represent the approximate proportion of the black to white population of students in these two urban schools.

TABLE 3

RACE FREQUENCIES AND PERCENTAGES OF PARTICIPATING STUDENTS

| Race | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Black | 217 | 64.2 |
| White | 113 | 33.7 |

Of the 338 respondents, there were 134 males and 204 females. This distribution is consistent with the approximate population of students by sex at each school. This information is shown in table 4.

TABLE 4

SEX FREQUENCIES AND PERCENTAGES OF PARTICIPATING STUDENTS

| Sex | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Male | 134 | 39.6 |
| Female | 204 | 60.4 |

The word "children" in table 5 represents the number of children in the household. The range was from 1 to 8, with the mean for each household equaling two children.

TABLE 5

NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN HOUSEHOLD FREQUENCIES AND PERCENTAGES OF PARTICIPATING PARENTS

| Children | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 80 | 23.7 |
| 2 | 102 | 30.2 |
| 3 | 93 | 27.5 |
| 4 | 37 | 10.9 |
| 5 | 15 | 4.4 |
| 6 | 8 | 2.4 |
| 7 | 1 | 0.3 |
| 8 | 2 | 0.6 |

The highest number of respondents were in the income range of $50,000 and up. The smallest number was in the 0 - $5,000 range. This is represented in table 6.

TABLE 6

INCOME RANGE FREQUENCIES AND PERCENTAGES OF PARTICIPATING PARENTS

| Income | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| $ 0 - 5,000 | 26 | 7.7 |
| 5,001 - 10,000 | 32 | 9.5 |
| 10,001 - 15,000 | 29 | 8.6 |
| 15,001 - 20,000 | 28 | 8.3 |
| 20,001 - 25,000 | 32 | 9.5 |
| 25,001 - 30,000 | 45 | 13.3 |
| 30,001 - 40,000 | 56 | 16.6 |
| 40,001 - 50,000 | 33 | 9.8 |
| 50,001 - and up | 57 | 16.9 |

Of the 338 respondents, table 7 reveals that only 99 of the students were employed outside the home.

TABLE 7

EMPLOYMENT STATUS FREQUENCIES AND PERCENTAGE OF PARTICIPATING STUDENTS

| Status | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Not Empoyed | 239 | 70.7 |
| Employed | 99 | 29.3 |

Table 8 represents parents overall rating of their levels of parent participation. The highest number of respondents perceived their level of parent participation to be good. Only five perceived their level of participation to be poor.

TABLE 8

FREQUENCIES AND PERCENTAGES OF PARENTS' OVERALL RATING OF THEIR PARTICIPATION

| Rating | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Poor | 5 | 1.5 |
| Fair | 81 | 24.0 |
| Good | 164 | 48.5 |
| Excellent | 88 | 26.0 |

Below in table 9 is a listing of the mean scores and the standard deviations for all variables. The mean score for the SRA Achievement Test is 423.26. The range for this data set is from 242 to 698. The mean GPA is 2.03 on a scale of 4.00. The range for the GPA is .05 to 4.73. The weighting of some courses for gifted students is higher than the standard 4.00; thus, allowing the maximum GPA to exceed 4.00. The statistical information for the SRA Achievement Test indicates the use of validity studies to establish a moderate to strong correlation between the battery of tests and grade point average.[1] The scores used for the SRA tests

were the composite scores, which represent the entire battery of tests administered.

TABLE 9

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR ALL VARIABLES

| Variable | Mean | Std. Dev. |
|---|---|---|
| GPA | 2.03 | 0.82 |
| Monitor | 3.27 | 1.01 |
| Personal | 3.60 | 1.04 |
| Social | 3.01 | 1.19 |
| Direct | 3.19 | 1.54 |
| Indirect | 3.09 | 0.83 |
| Class | 10.49 | 1.13 |
| Age | 16.05 | 1.42 |
| Race | 0.38 | 0.54 |
| Sex | 0.60 | 0.49 |
| Children | 2.54 | 1.32 |
| Income | 4.59 | 2.56 |
| Employed | 0.29 | 0.46 |
| Rating | 1.99 | 0.75 |
| SRA | 423.26 | 79.20 |

## Statistical Analysis

Table 10 is a 15 x 15 correlational matrix recording the Pearson correlation coefficients and the probabilities for both the criterion and predictor variables for the 338 respondents. The coefficient in the matrix describes a moderately positive relationship between SRA test scores and GPA in the present study. Therefore, even though SRA test scores measures general aptitude in contrast to GPA, which measures specific classroom, day-to-day learning levels, the two

were correlated. Only regression results will determine whether this relationship is significant.

The five categories of parent participation, personal, monitor, social, direct, and indirect, are all based on a scale of one to five. Table 9 gives the mean scores of the respondents. The mean score for the category "Personal" is highest. In decreasing order, the other categories of parent participation are as follows: monitoring, direct, social and indirect. All of the mean scores are 3.0 or higher; therefore, this is evidence that, in this study, generally the average parent's level of participation in the educational process of their child is above average.

In the correlation matrix in table 10, the simple correlations are given for each of the five categories of parent participation and each of the demographic variables. For example, in the horizontal, column headings at the top of the table, the variable "personal," is listed. In the vertical, row listings on the left side of the matrix, the variable, "age," is listed. The numbers printed in the intersecting block corresponding to these two variables represent the correlation coefficient and the probability for these two variables. For the purpose of understanding the use of this table, the correlation coefficient is listed on the top and probability value is listed at the bottom of each block. All references to the simple correlations and probabilities are documented in table 10. The researcher has set the acceptable probability level at .05 for determining significance for each set of variables. The range possible for the correlation coefficient is -1.0 to 1.0. A weak correlation would

TABLE 10

PEARSON CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS/PROBABILITIES

| | SRA | GPA | PERSONAL | MONITOR | DIRECT | INDIRECT | SOCIAL | AGE | CLASS | RACE | SEX | CHILDREN | INCOME | EMPLOYED | RATING |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SRA | | .61 | .04 | .05 | .02 | .04 | -.03 | .12 | .12 | -.04 | .05 | -.09 | .02 | .11 | -.01 |
| | | .01 | .48 | .32 | .74 | .49 | .63 | .04 | .03 | .43 | .41 | .09 | .65 | .06 | .99 |
| GPA | .62 | | .11 | .12 | .01 | .09 | .04 | .05 | .07 | -.13 | .07 | -.08 | -.01 | .03 | -.01 |
| | .01 | | .04 | .02 | .80 | .11 | .50 | .37 | .23 | .01 | .22 | .15 | .83 | .56 | .95 |
| PERSONAL | .04 | .11 | | .69 | .03 | .70 | .54 | -.15 | -.05 | -.06 | .10 | -.17 | .22 | -.06 | .50 |
| | .48 | .04 | | .01 | .65 | .01 | .01 | .01 | .41 | .27 | .07 | .01 | .01 | .27 | .01 |
| MONITOR | .06 | .12 | .69 | | .02 | .68 | .63 | -.18 | -.09 | -.10 | .12 | -.12 | .20 | -.15 | .47 |
| | .32 | .02 | .01 | | .66 | .01 | .01 | .01 | .09 | .06 | .03 | .03 | .01 | .01 | .01 |
| DIRECT | .02 | .01 | .03 | .02 | | .03 | .08 | -.09 | -.07 | -.04 | .05 | .01 | .06 | -.04 | .04 |
| | .74 | .80 | .65 | .66 | | .61 | .12 | .11 | .18 | .43 | .39 | .81 | .26 | .49 | .50 |
| INDIRECT | .04 | .09 | .70 | .68 | .03 | | .61 | -.17 | -.08 | -.03 | .12 | -.12 | .33 | -.10 | .45 |
| | .49 | .11 | .01 | .01 | .61 | | .01 | .01 | .14 | .57 | .04 | .02 | .01 | .08 | .01 |
| SOCIAL | -.03 | .04 | .54 | .63 | .08 | .61 | | -.08 | -.05 | -.14 | .12 | -.05 | .10 | -.13 | .28 |
| | .63 | .50 | .01 | .01 | .12 | .01 | | .13 | .40 | .01 | .04 | .37 | .06 | .01 | .01 |
| AGE | .12 | .05 | -.15 | -.18 | -.09 | -.17 | -.08 | | .82 | -.02 | -.04 | -.04 | -.07 | .31 | -.05 |
| | .04 | .37 | .01 | .01 | .11 | .01 | .13 | | .01 | .66 | .50 | .46 | .19 | .01 | .36 |
| CLASS | .12 | .07 | -.05 | -.09 | -.07 | -.08 | -.05 | .82 | | .01 | .09 | -.05 | .07 | .30 | -.01 |
| | .03 | .23 | .41 | .09 | .18 | .14 | .40 | .01 | | .81 | .12 | .35 | .22 | .01 | .87 |
| RACE | -.04 | -.13 | -.06 | -.10 | -.04 | -.03 | -.14 | -.02 | .01 | | -.07 | -.03 | .23 | .05 | -.07 |
| | .43 | .01 | .27 | .06 | .43 | .57 | .01 | .66 | .81 | | .23 | .54 | .01 | .35 | .18 |
| SEX | .05 | .07 | .10 | .12 | .05 | .12 | .12 | -.04 | .09 | -.07 | | -.02 | -.03 | -.05 | .11 |
| | .41 | .22 | .07 | .03 | .39 | .04 | .04 | .50 | .12 | .23 | | .66 | .62 | .36 | .04 |
| CHILDREN | -.09 | -.08 | -.18 | -.12 | .01 | -.12 | -.05 | -.04 | -.05 | -.03 | -.02 | | -.15 | .11 | -.11 |
| | .09 | .15 | .01 | .03 | .81 | .02 | .37 | .46 | .35 | .54 | .66 | | .01 | .05 | .04 |
| INCOME | .02 | -.01 | .22 | .20 | .06 | .33 | .10 | -.07 | .07 | .23 | -.03 | -.15 | | .09 | .23 |
| | .65 | .83 | .01 | .01 | .26 | .01 | .06 | .19 | .22 | .01 | .62 | .01 | | .10 | .01 |
| EMPLOYED | .11 | .03 | -.06 | -.15 | -.04 | -.10 | -.13 | .31 | .30 | .05 | -.15 | .11 | .09 | | -.12 |
| | .06 | .66 | .27 | .01 | .49 | .08 | .01 | .01 | .01 | .35 | .36 | .05 | .10 | | .02 |
| RATING | -.01 | -.01 | .50 | .47 | .04 | .45 | .28 | -.05 | -.01 | -.07 | .11 | -.11 | .23 | -.12 | |
| | .99 | .95 | .01 | .01 | .50 | .01 | .01 | .36 | .87 | .18 | .04 | .04 | .01 | .02 | |

extend from 0 to + or - .4; a moderate correlation would be represented by + or - .41 to + or - .6; and a strong correlation would be represented by + or - .61 to + or - 1.0. For "personal" and "age," you will observe that there is a negative correlation of -.15. A negative correlation indicates an inverse relationship. Even though the strength of this relationship is negligible, the direction suggests the the logic that as age increases, the level of "personal" interaction by parents decreases. However, even though the correlation coefficient was low, the probability that age being related to "personal" was significant in that the probability is .01. If a probability is less than .05, which is the level set by the researcher, then the correlation is significant.[2] Similarly the category "personal" had a negative correlation with class, race, number of children in household and employment status of child. Of these negative correlations, the probability indicates that the correlation coefficients were significant for age, number of children in household, income and rating. Additionally, even though all of these negative correlations were negligible, they indicate the direction of these negligible relationships.

Interestingly, as shown in table 10, there were no strong relationships between any of the categories of parent participation and any of the demographic variables. The strongest of any of them was "indirect" correlated to income. This correlation, .33, was a weak correlation; but, it did represent a significant relationship because the probability was less than .05. It is appropriate to note that the purpose of correlational research is not to establish a causal effect; rather, its purpose is

for exploratory reasons in areas where little or no previous research has been done.[3] Earlier in this study, it was clarified that no systematic research had been done on parent participation and student achievement at the secondary school level. Therefore, even a weak relationship can serve as the foundation for future quasi-experimental studies on the relationship between parent participation and student achievement since significantly weak relationships were found between: Personal and GPA; Monitor and GPA; Race and GPA; Age and SRA test scores; and Class and SRA test scores.

It is also interesting to note that in table 9 the mean income level was 4.59, which translates from the coding to fall between $20,000 and $30,000. Recalling prior data, table 6 revealed that the highest number of respondents made $50,000 and up. The description of the population of the two schools involved shows the socioeconomic level to range from lower middle to poverty levels. Therefore, the mean income from table 9 would be more representative of the population. It was observed in several instances that respondents provided erroneous answers to demographic questions regarding personal income.

The other mean score presented in table 9, that was shown to be important was the mean of the rating. Rating refers to the parents' overall rating of their perceived level of participation. The mean score is 1.99, which indicates that the parents' self perceptions of their level of participation was somewhat lower than the scores derived from the questions on the questionnaire.

The mean scores derived from the questions on the questionnaire were all 3.00 or higher, on a scale of 1 to 5.

## Using Data to Test Hypotheses

The first Subproblem stated as a part of the research questions was: What is the level of parent participation in the educational process of children? The hypothesis: There is a relationship between the level of parent participation and demographic factors such as race and income of parents, age, sex, grade, employment status of child and number of children in household. Based on the data collected the categories of parent participation can be described as personal, monitoring, social, direct and indirect. These categories were measured on a scale from one to five. The mean score of each of these categories is shown in table 9. The information in the table shows the category of parent participation, "personal," to have had the highest mean score. In decreasing order, the other categories of parent participation are as follows: monitoring, direct, social and indirect. However, all categories were 3.00 or higher. This indicates that, in the present study, generally the average parent's level of participation in the educational process of their child is above average.

To discuss the relationship between levels of parent participation and demographic variables, references will now be made to table 11. This table lists the percentages by category for race.

The lowest percentage level for black and white parents was in the area of "direct," while the highest was "personal." For races other than black and white, the lowest percent was also "direct," with "monitor" representing the highest percent. For both blacks and whites, their contacts with the school is minimal; whereas, their personal interactions with the child are considerably higher. In contrast, those of other races have the highest level of participation in the area of "monitor," which means they place measurable restraints on their children. However, the "other" race is represented by such a small number (N=7) that the results are not significant.

TABLE 11

PERCENTAGES OR RESPONDENTS BY RACE WHO HAVE LEVELS OF PARENT PARTICIPATION ABOVE THE 2.5 MIDPOINT

| Levels of Parent Participation | Black % | White % | Other % |
|---|---|---|---|
| Personal | 81 | 87 | 57 |
| Monitor | 76 | 75 | 86 |
| Social | 59 | 67 | 57 |
| Direct | 48 | 46 | 43 |
| Indirect | 71 | 76 | 71 |

Observe in table 10 the correlation between the level of parent participation and income. For the "personal" component of parent participation, the correlation was small; but, the

probability of .01 is less than the .05 level set for the analysis, which makes the low correlation significant. Similarly, "monitor" and "indirect" have probability levels that indicated that the correlations were significant even though they were weak.

Table 10 also indicates that all of the correlations between age and the different components of parent participation were negative. This means, where they were significant, as age increases, parent participation decreases. "Personal," "monitor" and "indirect" all had a probability less than .05. Therefore, even though the correlations were weak, these weak correlations were significant.

For the variable, sex, the parent participation components had only slight correlations. However, there were some parent participation components that were significant, namely "monitor," "social" and "indirect."

All of the correlations relating class and the five components of parent participation were negative; thus, there were inverse relationships. As grade level increases, parent participation decreases. Because of the probability levels, none of the parent participation components were significant to grade level, except as grade level relates to age.

The correlations for employment status of child and all areas of parent participation were negative. Again, inverse relationships were shown. If students were employed, the levels of parent participation were decreased. The probability levels below .05 include "monitor" and "social."

The correlation between number of children in household and parent participation gave an inverse relationship for all except "direct." "Personal," "monitor" and "indirect" were significant because of the low probabilities. The more children in a household, the lower the level of parent participation.

In summary for Subproblem I, all of the correlations were weak; however, because the purpose of correlational research is only to identify possible correlates, many of these demographic variables were significant enough that they form the basis for future quasi-experimental research in this area.

Subproblem II: Is there a relationship between the levels of parent participation, income level and student achievement? Hypothesis: There is a relationship between the level of income, level of parent participation and student achievement. The correlations and probabilities associated with these relationships are found in table 10. The correlation between income and SRA scores was .02 and the probability value was .65. This was an indication that there did not exist a significant relationship between SRA test scores and income. The correlation between income and GPA was -.01; the probability value was .83. Again, a significant relationship between income and GPA did not exist.

Other data detailing the correlation between income and the five categories of parent participation are also found in table 10. With these simple correlation coefficients, it was clear that there was not a strong correlation between income, parent participation and student achievement. However, for exploratory purposes, the correlation coefficients relating income and personal, income

and indirect, as well as income and monitor were higher than any others, and had probability values less than .05. Thus, the results were: There is a relationship between some aspects of parent participation (personal, monitor and indirect) and family income. Also found to be significant was the relationship between GPA and some aspects of parent participation (personal and monitor) by noting in table 10 that the probability levels for these relationships were below .05.

In contrast to these significant relationships, there was a weak negative relationship between income and GPA; but, the probability value was .83. These results indicate that: There is no relationship between income level and grade point average. Further, the results indicate that: There is no significant relationship between income and GPA. This finding is not consistent with those of prior studies that show that income is related to student achievement. One explanation to this conflicting finding is that there were numerous missing answers on this question on the Personal Data Sheet. The results do in fact show that: There is a relationship between parent participation and GPA.

Subproblem III: Is there a relationship between race, age, grade, sex, children, student employment and the level of parent participation and student achievement?

1. Hypothesis Statement: There is a relationship between race and level of parent participation. "Social" is the only component of parent participation correlated with race at a significant level.

However, if percentages are considered, of the participants in this study, 33 percent of the white parents scored below the midpoint (2.5) on the "social" aspect of parent participation; while only 41 percent of black parents scored below the midpoint, and 43 percent of other races scored below the midpoint. Table 12 indicates that, by comparison, black parents scored further below the midpoint in all areas of parent participation than white parents except in the "monitor" and "direct" areas. Thus, the researcher can state as a result of the data that: There is a relationship between race and level of parent participation.

TABLE 12

PERCENTAGES OF RACE AND LEVELS OF PARENT PARTICIPATION SCORING BELOW THE MIDPOINT (2.5)

| Levels of Parent Participation | Black % | White % | Other % |
|---|---|---|---|
| Personal | 19 | 13 | 43 |
| Monitor | 24 | 25 | 14 |
| Social | 41 | 33 | 43 |
| Direct | 52 | 54 | 57 |
| Indirect | 29 | 24 | 29 |

2. Hypothesis Statement: There is a relationship between the age or grade of the student, the level of parent participation and student achievement. From table 10, one can observe that class (grade) had no significant relationship with any of the

parent participation components. Class (grade) and SRA test scores have a significant relationship; but, there is no significant relationship between class (grade) and GPA. Therefore, the researcher can report that only a relationship could be ascertained between class and SRA.

3. Hypothesis Statement: There is a relationship between number of children in household, level of parent participation and student achievement. Table 10 indicates a weak, inverse relationship between number of children and level of parent participation. Additionally, the probability values indicate a significant relationship between number of children in household and the "personal," "monitor" and "indirect" aspects of parent participation. Therefore, the results state a weak relationship between number of children in household and parent participation. Table 10 also shows an inverse relationship between both GPA and SRA test scores and number of children in household. The probabilities do not indicate that these relationships are significant. In contrast, the results indicate no relationship between number of children and student achievement.

4. Hypothesis Statement: There is a relationship between employed students and level of parent participation and student achievement. Table 10 indicates a weak, inverse relationship between employed students and parent participation. Of the levels of parent participation, there existed significant relationships between employed students and "monitor" and "social." There was a significant relationship between employed

students and SRA test scores; but, not between employed students and GPA. Thus, the results reveal a relationship between employed students and student achievement when the student achievement measure is SRA.

## Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis

Tables 13 and 14 represent the stepwise multiple regression analyses performed for all independent variables and the criterion variables, GPA and SRA test scores

. These tables contain data obtained at the .10 significance level. The levels of parent participation were entered first; however, as other variables were added, most of them were removed from the model because of the insignificance of the strengths of the correlations. Table 13 indicates race and monitor to have the strongest correlation to GPA. The C(P) value associated with monitor is 2.67. This statistic is close to the number of independent variables when the best regression model is chosen.[4] Therefore, the model of "race, monitor and GPA" was the most appropriate model to use with the present study at the .10 level of significance. Table 13 shows the correlation coefficient for race to be stronger than that of monitor.

In table 13, the F ratio was calculated for race to be 6.12 and a probability of 0.01. Since the previously set probability for inclusion in the model was .10, then, the probability value for race was shown to be significant. The F ratio for monitor was 4.18 and the probability was 0.03. Similarly, monitor is significant because its probability value did not exceed the present .05 value.

TABLE 13

STEPWISE MULTIPLE REGRESSION AT .10 SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL BETWEEN LEVELS OF PARENT PARTICIPATION, DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES AND GPA

| | Model R | C (P) | F | Prob. F |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Race | 0.02 | .85 | 6.12 | 0.01 |
| Monitor | 0.03 | .67 | 4.18 | 0.04 |

Table 14 presents the stepwise analysis for the dependent variable, SRA test scores. Even though, the levels of parent participation were entered first, when each of the other demographic variables were entered, class (grade) was the only variable that had a correlation coefficient strong enough to be

TABLE 14

STEPWISE MULTIPLE REGRESSION AT .10 SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL BETWEEN LEVELS OF PARENT PARTICIPATION, DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES AND SRA

| | Model R | C (P) | F | Prob. F |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Class | 0.01 | 1.74 | 4.80 | 0.02 |

considered as the best model. Again, note that the C(P) value (1.74) was close to the number of independent variables, which is

1. No other variables met the 0.10 significance level for entry into the model.

At the .15 level of significance, the stepwise regression procedure for the dependent variable, GPA, allowed three variables to enter the model. They were race, monitor and class, in descending order of the strength of their correlations to GPA. No other variables met the .15 significance level for entry. This information is presented in table 15. In the summary data in table 15, the F ratios and the resulting probability values for F were presented. If the more restricted .05 level of significance used in the descriptive analysis had been employed here, the variables, race and monitor, would still have been significant. The variables that are significant in this model are race and monitor.

TABLE 15

STEPWISE MULTIPLE REGRESSION AT .15 SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL BETWEEN LEVELS OF PARENT PARTICIPATION, DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES AND GPA

| | Model R | C (P) | F | Prob. F |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Race | 0.02 | 4.85 | 6.12 | 0.01 |
| Monitor | 0.03 | 2.67 | 4.18 | 0.04 |
| Class | 0.04 | 2.57 | 2.11 | 0.15 |

Table 16 describes the stepwise regression procedure for the dependent variable, SRA test scores, at the .15 significance level. The three variables allowed to enter the model were class, children and employed. This also represents the values of their correlation coefficients in descending order. However, an inspection of the F ratios and the resulting F probability values indicated only class to be a significant variable at the .05 level when related to the dependent variable, SRA test scores.

TABLE 16

STEPWISE MULTIPLE REGRESSION AT .15 SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL BETWEEN LEVELS OF PARENT PARTICIPATION, DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES AND SRA

| | Model R | C (P) | F | Prob. F |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Class | 0.01 | 2.58 | 4.80 | 0.03 |
| Children | 0.02 | 1.95 | 2.64 | 0.11 |
| Employed | 0.03 | 1.52 | 2.44 | 0.12 |

It is important to point out that the choice to include both GPA and SRA test scores as measures of achievement results in an interesting finding. Race is related to GPA; but, race is not correlated to SRA test scores. This finding may indicate a bias in grading by teachers in the schools. Further systematic research is needed to determine the nature of the differences between achievement measures with GPA, which indicates day-to-day grading of students versus SRA test scores, which is a general

measure of overall achievement and determined by more objective means than GPA.

Another interesting finding is that class (grade) is more related to SRA test scores than to GPA. This may be attributed to the increase in dropout rates at the higher grade levels.

Finally, the researcher chose to use a more lenient level of significance for the multiple regression analysis because the initial simple correlations were not very high. Thus, any and all relationships were sought. Additionally, the purpose of the study was more exploratory than confirmatory. Lastly, the significance levels were chosen to be lenient because the instrument used was new and used in this study for the first time.

## Summary

The analysis of the data indicated generally weak correlation coefficients. However, further inspection of the probability levels of the data was able to reveal numerous variables that were significantly correlated to both the level of parent participation and the dependent variable, student achievement.

This data supports the purpose of correlational research. It does not provide data to draw causal effects; but, it does provide the basis for future research in this area for further exploration of the relationship between parent participation and student achievement.

## ENDNOTES

[1]Ninth Mental Measurements Yearbook, edited by James V. Mitchell, Jr., Vol. II, (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1985), p. 1426.

[2]Fred N. Kerlinger and Elazar J. Pedhazur, Multiple Regression in Behavioral Research (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1973), p. 290.

[3]Walter R. Borg and Meredith D. Gall, Educational Research: An Introduction (White Plains, New York: Longman Inc., 1983), p. 576.

[4]Fred N. Kerlinger and Elazar J. Pedhazur, p. 295.

# CHAPTER V

## SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

This study provides a framework for the involvement of parents in the educational processes of their children for the purpose of improving student achievement. The literature supports such a concept; and many aspects of this exploratory, correlational study also support the ideology surrounding the relationship of parent participation in the educational process and student achievement at the high school level.

A framework was developed to explain the various levels of parent participation recognized and shown to be significant in determining the different means by which parents interact with their children. This "Parent Participation Model" can be found in Appendix A for quick reference. The model depicts the parent as a central part of the child's life. The interaction of the child with society is, in reality, an extension of the parent and his or her influence on the child. The five components of this Parent Participation Model are: (1) parent to child (personal, affective); (2) parent to child (monitoring); (3) parent to child (social, school, society); (4) parent to school (direct); and (5) parent to school (indirect).

The parent interacts with the child directly on a personal, affective level. The personal, affective level of interaction is begun at birth and includes cuddling, touching and direct instructional behaviors of parents with their children. This study has shown that this aspect of parent participation continues to be important in the lives of teenagers in the high school setting.

The second component of parent participation is the interaction of the parent with the child on a monitoring level. Oftentimes, teenagers resist through rebellious actions the interest of a parent when the parent restricts the daily activities of the child. The model describes this function as " monitoring." The study has shown the monitoring function to be significant as it relates to some demographic characteristics of children and their families.

Another component is social. Social refers to the values, method of conflict resolution, choices, etc. that the child has incorporated or is in the process of digesting as a result of the teaching process of the parents in the past, current and in continuous situations. These values are evident in the classroom with the child portraying those behaviors advocated by the parent in daily classroom behavior patterns.

The parent also can participate in the educational process of the child by interacting directly with the school. The parent may contact the school by using the telephone, a note or a parent conference. Positive direct interaction with the school can produce a result that will cast the child in a positive light by the teacher. Research reported earlier in this study supports the fact

that teacher expectations can contribute to improving a child's performance in the classroom. The idea is for the parent to make a positive contact with the school before he or she has to go to the school for a disciplinary problem.

The last aspect of parent participation is the indirect interaction of the parent with the school, community or any other nonspecific individual or media source that may provide bits and pieces of information about the school. Oftentimes, parents discuss their perceptions of the school with acquaintances on the job or around the fireplace. Discussions of this sort can result in the parent developing either a misinterpretation of the intent of the school, a negative or positive bias. Parents who are indirectly involved often view the Parent Teacher Association as a negative force, which is in direct contrast to the goals and objectives of the organization. These parents will simply send money to pay membership dues and never again choose to attend a meeting or assist in any worthwhile instructional or co-curricular activity at the school.

In addition to these five components of parent participation in the educational process of their child, this study also has chosen to attend to the interaction of certain demographic variables such as combined family income range, race, grade, age, student employment, number of children in household and parents' self perceptions of their overall rating of parent participation.

## Summary of Findings

The required response rate of parents was attained because of the intensity of the efforts by the research assistants in each school and the coordination and encouragement by the researcher. This result indicates the realization of a goal-directed effort when adults continue to motivate and stimulate students.

Parents perceive their level of participation in a positive way at the two high schools where the research was conducted. This presents a broadened view of the "expectation theory." If parents perceive themselves to participate at a high level with the child, then the rule of the self-fulfilling prophecy could very well be triggered. Therefore, just as teachers in urban schools are often sent to workshops for learning strategies and techniques to approach the ghetto, minority, low-achieving student with higher expectations, then, it follows logic that this same concept could be implemented with parents.

Approximately 29 percent of the 338 students in the study were employed. There was an inverse relationship between levels of parent participation and student employment. Therefore, if parent participation has any negligible relationship to student achievement, the loss of that negligible amount for those employed students may mean a decrease in the level of student achievement. Student employment is becoming more and more a part of the accepted way of a teenager's lifestyle. This is a phenomenon that needs to be addressed in directed research before it affects a larger percentage of today's school youth. The type of job experience may have some influence on

such an investigation. If the child is employed as a part of a directed work/study program, the results may be different than for those students who are employed for the purpose of supplying basic needs for themselves and their families. The limitations of this study does not address this; but, this study does provide enough exploratory relationships to stimulate questions concerning student employment.

Of the levels of parent participation and its relationship to the demographic variables, "indirect" had the strongest correlation. This component of parent participation relates to the reception of information about the school from the community and any nonspecific individuals informally. These results may be explained by suggesting that the schools are succeeding to some degree with their public relations campaigns. Therefore, parents in the school districts where this study was conducted who receive information indirectly are actually receiving "good" or "positive" information in spite of the present overall negative publicity about public education in this country.

The findings also indicate a significant, inverse relationship between age and parent participation. If parent participation is related to student achievement, and this study has shown areas of significant relationships, logic indicates that in order for this participation to have the greatest influence, parent participation must be a continuing process.

Sex did not correlate very strong with parent participation. However, those areas that correlated most with sex were monitor and social. Observations by the researcher reinforces these

correlations. Society permits less monitoring and less restraints on social behavior for males.

Grade level is commensurate with age. As grade level increases, nine through twelve, the level of parent participation decreases.

An inverse significant relationship was shown between number of children in household and parent participation. The more children in the household, the lower the level of parent participation. Reason also suggests that if there are more children in the house, the parent has to divide the available time among more individuals; thus, this means less time for each child.

One interesting relationship obtained from the data related to income is that there was an inverse relationship between income and student achievement. The higher the income the lower the student achievement. This phenomenon is created by unwillingness by the respondents to accurately provide income data. Consequently, additional systematic research using more verifiable data is needed to establish the nature of this relationship.

When the results of the stepwise multiple regression were available, it was interesting to note that the only variables with significant relationships with GPA were race and monitor. Of these relationships, monitor had the strongest correlation. Therefore, by definition, monitor refers to the restraints placed on children by their parents for the purpose of advancing the educational process. Consequently, parents may be encouraged to restrict and limit those behaviors and activities that detract from

the educational processes of their children. The only variable that related significantly to SRA in the stepwise multiple regression model was class.

## Recommendations

Even though all correlations were weak in this correlational study, the intended purpose of this study was fulfilled. Exploration of the relationships between parent participation in the educational process of students and student achievement has been accomplished. This exploration has resulted in some areas that need additional, systematic research; and, this study has given some suggestions to specific areas of concern.

If parents could be informed that research indicates that most parents perceive themselves as "good" in their level of parent participation in the educational process of their children, then, more parents may become a part of this self-fulfilling prophecy, as well as motivating "good" parents to work even harder. Just as teachers are taught strategies and techniques to deal more effectively with low-achieving and minority students, so it can be with parents of these students. If the parents' perceptions of their parenting can be coupled with documented strategies for the purpose of improving levels of parent participation, then student achievement could be enhanced to a level commensurate with the parents' self perceptions. Conversely, since there existed a negligible inverse relationship between parents' self perceptions of parenting and student achievement, then, again, strategies can be developed to elevate

their actual participation so that student achievement can be elevated.

In the school districts where the research was conducted, the public relations campaigns are moderately effective. This is evidenced by the significant relationship between the indirect component of parent participation and student achievement. As a result of this correlation, school divisions may develop and market a positive advertising campaign that will infiltrate all segments of the community. Parental attitudes toward the school influence the attitudes of their children. Parent attitudes can result in improved student achievement because those students of the involved parents will be more receptive to academic enriched programs. Development of such public relations programs will have to be specific to each school system and contingent on the political and economic conditions of the community.

The ultimate recommendation would be to develop a "Parent Participation Model" for the high school setting such as the model shown in Appendix B. One concept that has been shown to have positive effects in numerous localities is the creation of a "fundamental school" concept. Most of these concepts have been implemented either at the elementary school level or the middle school level. The concept involves parents having to make application for their sons or daughters to attend a designated school with more traditional and stringent policies and guidelines than those advocated in the majority of today's public schools. The contractual arrangement between the parent and the school will set

specific parameters that have been shown in previous research to be correlates of increased student achievement. The specifics of such a model would be contingent upon the parent participation correlates found in each school division.

# APPENDIX A - QUESTIONNAIRE

PARENT(S) QUESTIONNAIRE

The following questions are designed to ascertain your level of parental involvement. None of the information on this questionnaire will be used to identify you as an individual. All information will be discussed collectively. All questions are to be answered by choosing one of the numbered responses. Please answer all questions. Answer them as they relate to the son/daughter who has presented this packet to you.

| | Never/ Seldom 1 | Sometimes 2 | Often 3 | Most of the time 4 | All of the time 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. In the past year, how often have you participated in in-school conferences concerning selecting your child's courses? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. In the past year, how frequently have you requested information specific to your son/ daughter directly from school? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. How often do you attend initial orientation programs at the beginning of the school term at your son/ daughter's school? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. How often do you attend parent/teacher conferences requested by the teacher? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. How often do you contact each of your child's teachers when a problem exists? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6. How often do you contact each of your child's teachers when there is not a problem? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. In the past year, how often have you sought information about school from individuals other than school personnel? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. In the past year, how often have you volunteered for any school-related activity? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. In the past five years, how many times have you been a member of the PTA at your child's school? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. In the past five years, how often have you sought help for your child's educational progress from persons/ agencies other than those at the school where he/she attends? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. During any one week, how often are you available to talk to your child about school without other interferences? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. To what extent do you inquire about the schedule of tests, exams and other major school projects that your child is assigned? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 13. How often do you limit your child's television viewing on school nights? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. How often do you ask your child about daily homework assignments? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. If your child is employed, how often do you emphasize the importance of completing school assignments as a condition of continued employment? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16. How often each week do you ask your child how she/he is progressing in school? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 17. In the past month, how often have you sat down and held a conversation with your child about any subject? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18. How often do you provide necessary school supplies for your child? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19. To what extent do you provide a quiet environment for your child to complete homework assignments? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 20. How often do you consider homework when you assign household chores? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 21. To what extent do you assist your child with scheduling his/her co-curricular activities so they will not interfere with school/homework? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 22. During each week, how often do you ask how the school day was for your child? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 23. How often do you give words of encouragment to your child relating to school? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 24. How often do you discuss the positive aspects of your child's school with your child? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 25. How often do you discuss the positive aspects of your child's school with anyone? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

PERSONAL DATA SHEET

ALL ASPECTS OF THIS QUESTIONNAIRE RELATE ONLY TO THE SON/DAUGHTER WHOSE NAME APPEARS ON THE ENVELOPE.

Grade Level _____ Age _____ Race _____ Male or Female _____

Mother's Occupation _____ Father's Occupation _____

1. How many children are presently living in the household? _____

2. What is the highest level of education completed by the mother? _____
   (a) less than high school
   (b) high school graduate
   (c) technical school
   (d) Associate Degree
   (e) Bachelor of Science/Art Degree
   (f) Advanced Degree

3. What is the highest level of education completed by the father? _____
   (a) less than high school
   (b) high school graduate
   (c) technical school
   (d) Associate Degree
   (e) Bachelor of Science/Art Degree
   (f) Advanced Degree

4. What is the combined (mother and father) income range of the family?

   _____
   (a) $ 0 - $ 5,000
   (b) $ 5,001 - $10,000
   (c) $10,001 - $15,000
   (d) $15,001 - $20,000
   (e) $20,001 - $25,000
   (f) $25,001 - $30,000
   (g) $30,001 - $40,000
   (h) $40,001 - $50,000
   (i) $50,001 - and up

5. Is this child employed outside the home?_____ If yes, give average number of hours per week. _____

6. How would you rate your overall level of parental involvement with your child as it relates to school?
   (a) Poor
   (b) Fair
   (c) Good
   (d) Excellent

# APPENDIX B - PARENT PARTICIPATION MODEL

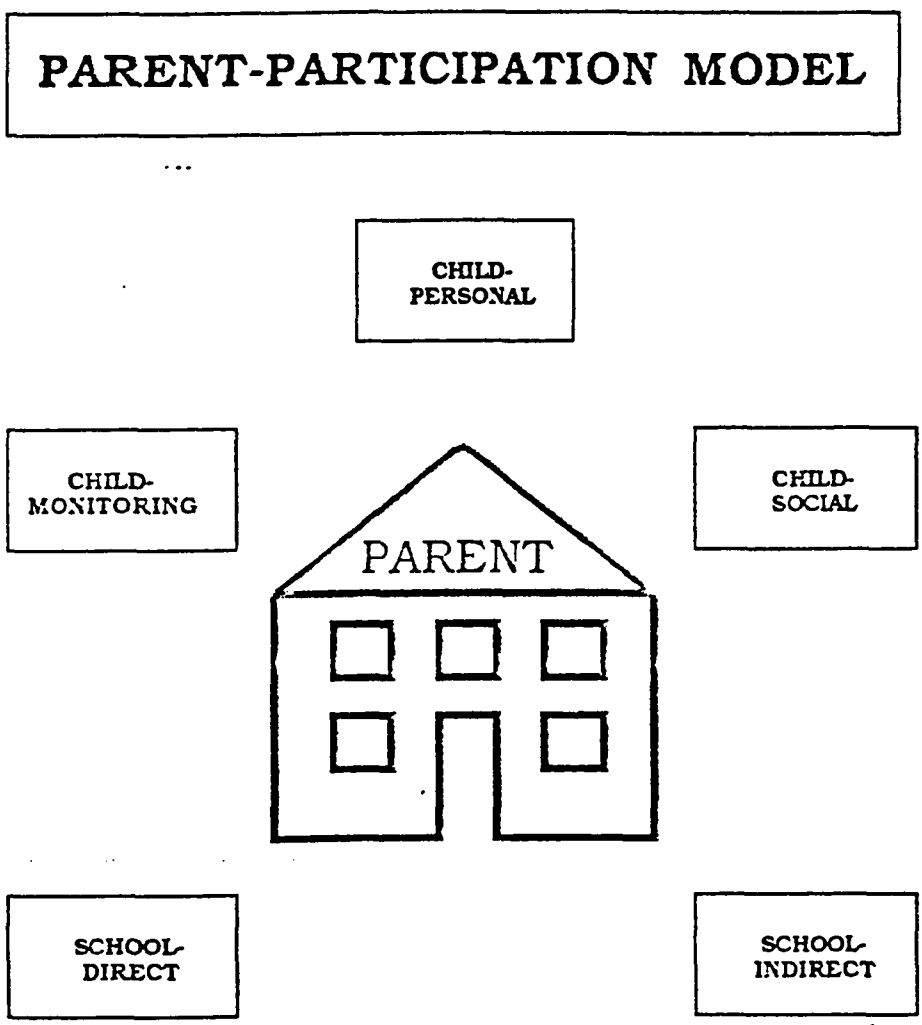


FIGURE 1

# APPENDIX C - STUDENT RECORD SHEET

STUDENT RECORD SHEET

TEACHERS: Please record the students' name beside the number of the questionnaire that you give to him/her. This is necessary for the purpose of comparing standardized test scores with the results of the questionnaire. All names will be destroyed before the researcher is given the data sheets.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | _____ | 21. | _____ |
| 2. | _____ | 22. | _____ |
| 3. | _____ | 23. | _____ |
| 4. | _____ | 24. | _____ |
| 5. | _____ | 25. | _____ |
| 6. | _____ | 26. | _____ |
| 7. | _____ | 27. | _____ |
| 8. | _____ | 28. | _____ |
| 9. | _____ | 29. | _____ |
| 10. | _____ | 30. | _____ |
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| 15. | _____ | 35. | _____ |
| 16. | _____ | 36. | _____ |
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| 18. | _____ | 38. | _____ |
| 19. | _____ | 39. | _____ |
| 20. | _____ | 40. | _____ |

# APPENDIX D - CORRESPONDENCE

23 Holiday Drive
Hampton, VA 23669
September 26, 1986

Children's Development Center
650 N. Main Street
Rockford, IL 61103

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

I am a Ph.D. student in the Urban Services Program at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia. My research interest involves "parent participation" and its relationship to student achievement at the secondary school level.

As a result of an inquiry from Educational Testing Service (ETS), I am interested in reviewing the instrument used in Project RHISE/Outreach. The title indicated was: Readiness Levels for Parent Involvement. In addition to reviewing the instrument, I would also like any background information on the development of the instrument and the results obtained by the project. Upon receipt of an invoice, I would be willing to pay for expenses incurred.

I certainly appreciate any and all assistance you may be able to offer as soon as possible.

Respectfully requested,

Linda W. Deans

Linda W. Deans
Phone: (804) 850-1822 (h)
(804) 722-2876 (w)

23 Holiday Drive
Hampton, Virginia 23669
October 6, 1986

National Center of Effective Secondary Schools
University of Wisconsin
1025 W. Johnson Street
Madison, Wisconsin 53706

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

I am in the Ph.D. in Urban Services Program at Old Dominion University, Norfolk, Virginia. I am seeking information that will assist me in completing a dissertation that will ascertain the relationship between the level of parent participation and student achievement at the secondary level. Presently, all of my course-work has been completed and I am working on writing a prospectus. My approach will include having the parents complete a perception instrument to determine the level of parent participation. The student achievement will be determined by the SRA Test scores and the Grade Point Averages. It will include grades 9-12.

With the brief information given above, will you send me any/all materials that might be available that will assist me in my efforts? I am willing to submit a reasonable fee upon receipt of information. Also, if there are other sources on Effective Schools Research that you can share with me, I would be most grateful.

Respectfully requested,

Linda W. Deans

PORTSMOUTH PUBLIC SCHOOLS

P. O. BOX 998 • PORTSMOUTH, VIRGINIA 23705 • (804) 393-875

115

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

November 13, 1987

Ms. Linda Deans
23 Holiday Drive
Hampton, VA 23669

Dear Ms. Deans:

Your request to conduct a study in one of our secondary schools has been approved. By copy of this letter, you are referred to Mrs. Olivia Hinton, Director of Secondary Education, for further discussion regarding specific procedures.

Mrs. Hinton may be reached at (804) 393-8884 or at the Department of Secondary Education, 3000 North Street, Portsmouth, VA 23707.

Sincerely,

B. Jane Garrett, Director
Planning and Research

BJG:ds

xc: Olivia T. Hinton, Director
Secondary Education

November 24, 1987

Ms. Linda W. Deans
23 Holiday Drive
Hampton, Virginia 23669

Dear Ms. Deans:

Your request to conduct a research study entitled "The Relationship Between Parent Participation and Student Achievement At the Secondary Level In Three Selected Urban School Districts" is granted. However, final approval is contingent upon the principal of High School, Mr.

Please be reminded that you must solicit the cooperation of the principal and other building level personnel to assist you.

Good luck to you in this endeavor.

Sincerely,

Anna G. Dodson

Anna G. Dodson
Director
Research, Testing and Statistics

jas

cc: Dr. Shirley B. Wilson, Regional Assistant Superintendent

23 Holiday Drive
Hampton, Virginia 23669
April 8, 1988

DEAR PARENTS OF HIGH SCHOOL:

Presently, I am a student at Old Dominion University, Norfolk, Virginia. As a requirement for completion of my course of study, a special project must be implemented. I need your assistance.

The research project that I have proposed is: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENT PARTICIPATION AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT. A research study of this nature has never been conducted at the secondary school level. In order to complete this research, I will have to assess the level of parent participation for a randomly selected group of students. The enclosed questionnaire will assess the level of parent participation; the SRA test scores and the grade point averages will be used to determine the combined achievement level for each grade.

The topic and methodology have been approved by my research committee at Old Dominion University. I would like for you to help me with this project by completing the attached questionnaire and by completing the personal data sheet. This will allow me to relate the relevant information. I will not identify any individual student or parent. There will be no names associated with any of the data. Rather, these results will be summarized by grade-level.

I sincerely, appreciate your assistance with this project. Please return the questionnaire and personal data sheet to your son/daughter's teacher within the next five days. Please answer the questions as they apply to the son/daughter who has presented it to you.

Again, confidentiality is assured for each parent, student and school.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda H. Deans

Linda H. Deans, Ph.D. Candidate
Old Dominion University

23 Holiday Drive
Hampton, Virginia 23669
April 8, 1988

DEAR PARENTS OF HIGH SCHOOL:

Presently, I am a student at Old Dominion University, Norfolk, Virginia. As a requirement for completion of my course of study, a special project must be implemented. I need your assistance.

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Linda W. Deans

Linda W. Deans, Ph.D. Candidate
Old Dominion University

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# AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

## AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Linda Worrell Deans, the daughter of Mrs. Ruther Worrell and the late Mr. Horace Worrell, was born in Wayne County, North Carolina on June 29, 1949. She received both her elementary and secondary education in the Wayne County School Division.

In 1970, she received a Bachelor of Science Degree in Biology and Chemistry from North Carolina Central University. She received her Master of Arts Degree in Guidance and Counseling from Old Dominion University in 1978.

Her work experience has been mostly in the field of education. She taught High School Biology for five years in Goldsboro, North Carolina, and worked concurrently as an adjunct faculty member for Beaufort Technical Institute in Washington, North Carolina.

She moved to Hampton, Virginia in 1974 and has been employed by the Hampton School System since that time. In addition to teaching science at the middle and high school levels, she has worked as a Resource Specialist and in the area of curriculum development, k - 12. She has held an administrative position, Dean of Women in a high school setting for the past eight years. She has continued to work full-time during the completion of both her M.A. Degree and her Ph.D. Degree. She broadened her

experiences further by completing internships as an Assistant Director for operationalizing the Hampton Street Academy, an alternative school for high school students and as a Personnel Specialist at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's Langley Research Center, Hampton, Virginia.

She is married to a wonderful husband, Mr. Ray Deans and the proud mother of two daughters, LaToya and Raynelle. She holds membership in numerous organizations, the most important of which she believes is the church.